CHURCH STREET

JEAN CARTER COCHRAN

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To my very dear friend,
Anna Scott Newhall
With the best of good wishes of
The Parson.
October 8. 1923.

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HOME

THERE IT STANDS WITH ITS SEVEN GABLES AND ITS ROOMY, HOSPITABLE AIR

CHURCH STREET

Stories of American Village Life

By

JEAN CARTER COCHRAN

Author of "The Bells of the Blue Pagoda," "Nancy's Mother", "Foreign Magic" etc.

PHILADELPHIA
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1922

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To My Family

"Is it enough to keep my door ajar
In hope that some may see the gleam afar
And guess that this is Home, and urge their way
To reach it haply, some how and some day?
May I not go, and lend them of my light?
May not mine eyes be unto them for sight?
May not the brother-love Thy love portray,
And news of Home make Home less far away?"

Author unknown.

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CHURCH STREET

Introduction

TWILIGHT

IN THE dusk of a winter's day, at the hour when the sun has slipped behind the horizon, trailing his royal robes of purple, scarlet, lavender, and gold, and the silver thread of the crescent moon is barely visible above one's head, when it is too light for electricity and yet too dark to read, then comes the time of daydreams and golden memories.

As the world outside grows dimmer, the recollections of "the day before yesterday" grow stronger and the understanding clearer; lives that years ago appeared sordid or trivial take on a new significance, assuming their true proportions, being transformed by the touch of one man and one woman whose story appears in these pages, the man and

the woman whose personality loved into greatness many sleeping souls.

I am asking you to dream with me back over thirty or more years and to go with me in spirit through our village streets. If we could have truly walked together those thirty years ago, we could have stopped at any gate and have received a warm welcome, not for your sake, nor for mine, but for the sake of him who labored in the white church on the hill.

We must take a leisurely pace this evening, for when we walk in memory we have no important errand to cause us to hasten; we may go down bypaths and little wood roads and return as the fancy suits us. This, O reader, we are going to do in this volume, so if you are in haste to be done and on with some other task, I warn you that this book is not for you. But if you love the country, and country ways and folk, I ask you to accompany me. We will take time to listen to the bird's song, to wander into meadows and woodlands in search of windflowers or

violets; most of all, we will take time to know our neighbors, for they, like gardens, are worth the cultivating.

Now, while I have been talking, we have come almost unawares to the first house on the farther side of our village. Later we will enter its hospitable gate, but at present I only bid you notice its stone walls gray with age, that have stood since the days of Washington. Perhaps in the dusk, if you but listen, you may hear the tramp, tramp of his soldiers' feet as they march past. Let us glance into the window. Do you see in the lamplight, seated beside the table, with hair like driven snow, a stately old lady? She is Miss Nancy Thompson. Later we will take tea with her and hear the traditions of our village, but now we will go forward until we reach the squire's house.

Be sure to notice the well with its moss-covered bucket. In that well is a spring which sends out the coolest, purest water that anyone ever tasted. Again, we will not pause for we shall meet the squire's family in every

good thing the village undertakes. I would like to tell in full what they have meant to all, but they have asked me to refrain, so this is a case where very gratitude holds me silent!

That white house is the village dressmaker's; she is very fond of flowers, as you can see from her front dooryard. Do you get a whiff of the mignonette? She makes the dresses for the manse children but we love her cookies and grapes even better, while her sweet face wreathed in smiles, bidding us enter, is best of all.

Yes, that is the post office which is our men's club, too. The nation's misdeeds as well as those of our village are discussed here every evening. The stage is at the door and they are taking in the mail bag. There are letters in that bag from all over the world. What a romance it could tell if only it could talk! In it have been carried the love letters of Lydia and Edward, and the letters from Lydia in Turkey to her mother in our village, and down to this day the letters of Lydia's son who is a knight in the Holy Land.

Up the street again, past Grandma Dalzell's and the Academy, until we reach the last house around which these stories center. There it stands with its seven gables, and its roomy, hospitable air. It is so dark now that we can scarcely see the dim, bent figure of a man at the carriage gate holding a lantern. Lift high your lantern, John, that we may see your face and you ours, for perhaps at the golden gate you may patiently stand and wait for your master's children as you are waiting for them now.

Hark! There is the sound of wheels and a chorus of children's voices is singing, "Merrily we roll along, roll along, roll along," until the carriage turns in and the children clamber down, while old John takes the horse to the stable. Into the house they stream, and as we look through the window into the sitting room we can count two girls and three boys—although the youngest boy runs around so fast there almost seems to be two of him — and the baby in Margaret's arms claps her hands.

There is something about the expression of

the parents that holds you. I knew it would. I can see in your eyes that you would like to meet the motherly woman, and as for the father, you give a start of surprise when you look at him. You try to glance away, but there is something that draws your eyes irresistibly back to his face. What is it that charms and wins you? As you turn these pages, you must learn for yourself what it is. All I can say is that every man, woman, and child in the village has recognized something different from other men in their minister, and you can hear it in their voices when they speak his name.

I would like to take you up to the hilltop and show you the white church with its tapering spire pointing skyward, but somehow to-night in the twilight I cannot stray beyond the manse, the manse which has sheltered many great men, many wise. But we will not think of them to-night. We will only recall the days of old when father, mother, and children together made that sweetest thing on earth, a happy family.

Chapter I

HOME

The road is wide and the stars are out and the breath
of the night is sweet,
And this is the time when wanderlust should seize
upon my feet.
But I'm glad to turn from the open road and the
starlight on my face,
And to leave the splendor of out-of-doors for a human
dwelling place.

— Joyce Kilmer

AGAIN it is evening. Listen to the wind hurling the snowy sleet against the windowpane, then shrieking off like a soul in torment to threaten with destruction loose walls and ill-built chimneys. Come, let us draw our great armchairs close to the blazing logs so that we may gaze into the heart of the flames and you may see in their depths some of the pictures I would paint for you of a group of children who lived in that old manse.

The day I would tell you of is so long ago that its morning is lost in the dim mist of vague memory, but the evening shines out clear and bright as if the strong west wind had swept the fog away. It is dusk and my brother and I, who have accompanied our parents on their pastoral calls, are being hurried into the carriage while Torwood, our old horse, will scarcely stand, so impatient is he to be gone.

"Up you go, children," says our father as my brother scrambles into his seat and I am lifted in after him. "Tuck the robe in well around you; we have six miles to go and the wind is sharp."

"Good-by!" we call to the friendly faces clustered in the doorway, and we are off.

Then memory wakes and I remember it all as clearly as if it had been yesterday, although it still seems incredible that the bright red hood trimmed with black belonged to me or that that round face with its large, serious eyes was mine. It seems almost as impossible to recognize in the wriggler sitting next to

me the dignified man who presides at committee meetings and council tables, for in his youth the only time his conduct ever foreshadowed future seriousness was in church when the solemnity of his attitude aroused the admiration of all the old ladies in his father's congregation.

As we talk of it, how vivid it all seems! It is autumn; there is the nip of frost in the air; the little gusts of wind that earlier in the afternoon had blown the yellow leaves before us on the road, making a golden pathway for old Torwood's feet, rise at the setting of the sun to a strong westerly gale that stings the cheeks and makes the ears tingle.

At first we can make out the dim outline of trees and a gray farmhouse, then God lights the stars in the sky and they hang so close, so very close, in the clear atmosphere, that we feel that we could almost put out our hands and touch them. A lane turns off from the road, leading to a little farmhouse nestled in the valley, but the only way we

know its location is by the rays of a lamp that twinkle through a window. We see other lights dotted along the hillside and we realize that night has fallen.

"Aren't we nearly there?" I ask, clapping my cold hands together.

"Ah, no, we have five miles yet to go," comes the disheartening response from the front seat.

Five miles means nothing to me; it might be five inches or five thousand miles for all I know of distance.

We look with longing at another light that streams from a house very close to the road; through the uncurtained windows we can see the blazing fire and almost hear it crackling up the chimney. The table is set for supper and we imagine that we smell the hot biscuit and crisp bacon.

Ten minutes elapse and we grow colder, viewing every house with envy, knowing that it stands for warmth and good cheer. The only place where I do not care to stop is a farm near the crossroads.

"There's where the little girl lives who makes the patchwork quilts," our mother informs me, while my brother gives me a dig with a sharp elbow.

I quickly change the subject. The year before in the course of an afternoon's call our parents made the unfortunate discovery that the small daughter of the house, a girl of exactly my age, had made a patchwork quilt. They seized upon the thought as a brilliant idea. If this child could make a quilt, surely their daughter, who is not mentally deficient, could do the same. There could be no more excellent way of learning to sew. The quilt became famous in the family; at this very minute a tiny piece of patchwork with clumsy, crooked stitches, well watered with tears, lies secreted in a cupboard where I hope my mother will not find it — it is my skeleton in the closet. What if my brothers should discover it? I saw one of their toys in that very place a day or two ago. I make a mental note that I must change its hiding place before I lie down to sleep.

It grows colder and my brother and I huddle together for warmth. At length we begin to brighten a little; in the course of what seems like centuries, we have come to the long hill that we recognize as being somewhere near home. Torwood slackens his pace to a walk and another decade passes before we reach the old Thompson place.

"We're almost there," announces the wriggler.

In another five minutes we pass the Liberty Pole and turn up the familiar street.

"I see John," I call in triumph.

"Pooh, I saw him long ago!" the wriggler responds. "I saw the lantern before we came to the Academy."

"Whoa!" our father calls very loud to Torwood, who is as eager to get to his stable as we are to enter the house.

"Pile out, children, and run in." We do not have to be bidden twice, only we are so stiff we run very wabblingly.

At the creak of the gate the front door has flown open and a broad band of light

floods the path. Here are warmth, light, and food, at last, at last!

"Not too close to the fire! You will get chilblains," our mother warns from winters of long experience. But what are future chilblains to present warmth? So we go on warming ourselves.

Then the dining-room door is thrown open and we all troop in to supper. It is a simple repast of hot bread and milk, but as the steam rises from the bowls, and I dip in my own particular silver spoon, waiting with it poised before my mouth while a blessing is being asked, I know that nothing will ever again taste so good. One piece of fresh gingerbread finishes the meal, and we are called away to evening prayers.

"Can't we have a game of 'still pond'?" pleads the wriggler as he hops up from his knees, hoping to delay by a game the evil hour of going to bed.

"We will play for twenty minutes," replies our father, "if you will go to bed promptly when time is up."

The room is soon cleared of furniture and the ceiling rings with laughter as father, mother, and children take part in the romp.

"Now off with you! Time is up!" And with a good-night kiss to our parents we reluctantly climb the stairs, while the wriggler, lying flat on his stomach, pushes himself up backward, in this manner putting off bedtime for at least thirty seconds.

Then I find that the sun, wind, and cold have done something strange to my eyes. As I undress I can scarcely hold the lids open.

"It's the sandman," explains Margaret, our nurse, whom we call Nanna, as she helps us to unfasten the buttons that simply will elude me. "He's been throwing dust in your eyes."

At last I kneel upon my bed with my head on Nanna's shoulder and begin the "Now I lay me." I get through the first part glibly enough, but when it comes to "God bless father, God bless mother," I strike a snag — there are so many relatives to remember. But with Margaret's help I finish, ending with, "and please don't let the house be

blown up with dynamite to-night." That day I have heard for the first time of high explosives, and I feel sure that the house is not adequately protected.

I lie down but it suddenly occurs to me, much to Margaret's disgust, that I have left out a most important personage, and I rise to my knees again to add a postscript to my prayer, "And please, God, bless the new mooley cow."

Then Margaret is permitted to tuck me up snug and warm, with nothing but the tip of my nose showing. She blows out the candle and goes halfway downstairs when I find that my mouth is dry and I know that if I do not have a drink there is danger of my dying of thirst before morning, the way men do in the desert.

"Nanna, I want a drink of water," I call, and hear echoes of the cry from other rooms.

Margaret realizes that there is no use in struggling against fate. "I never did see such children!" she grumbles, but brings the desired drink.

Finally I nestle down into bed, lulled to rest by the low murmur of our parents' voices in the room below. No longer do I envy the warmth and light of the farmhouses that border the road; I would not change places with the princess in her palace or Cinderella in her golden coach. Comfort and love surround me. I am at home!

If you call a gypsy a vagabond, I think you do him wrong,
For he never goes a-traveling but he takes his home along.
And the only reason a road is good, as every wanderer knows,
Is just because of the homes, the homes, the homes to which it goes.

They say that life is a highway and its milestones are the years,
And now and then there's a toll-gate where you buy your way with tears.
It's a rough road and a steep road, and it stretches broad and far,
But at last it leads to a golden Town where golden houses are.

— Joyce Kilmer

Chapter II

ORAL TRADITIONS

OUR VILLAGE was no vulgar young upstart, the mushroom growth of a night. It has taken us over two hundred years to reach our present modest proportions; the houses have increased at the dignified rate of two or three every five or ten years, and if more than one should be erected in a year we would shake our heads and wonder if there was danger of our rivaling Cripple Creek or some other notorious western town, whose hustling, bustling ways, and get-rich-quick methods are utterly abhorrent to our sense of good taste.

The situation of our village made us what might be called progressive conservatives or conservative progressives, our distance from the railway keeping us immune from the froth of modern progress, while our proximity to the great city gave us an opportunity

of keeping genteelly abreast of the times, or, if not quite abreast, only a lap behind. Anything really good finally reached us after it had been tested and warranted genuine. Even "Pinafore" was acted by our summer boarders, although it almost caused a scandal when the organist of the white church played "Little Buttercup" for a voluntary, as a delicate compliment to the leading lady when she walked up the aisle the Sunday morning following the performance; and it is interesting to add that that lady, not being willing to be outdone in courtesy, turned around and bowed and smiled her thanks to the organist seated in the gallery at the rear of the church. That day after service our conservatism was rampant and it must be recorded without delay that that particular offense was never repeated.

If we wished to think of the outside world, therefore, we needed only to climb the path to the church porch. Looking over our hills to the distant horizon, we could imagine that just beyond their farthest limits a mad world

was rushing by at a reckless rate. Or if we were of a more pensive mood, we might turn our footsteps by the sycamore into the graveyard, and, seating ourselves on the flat tombstones, we would be carried back a hundred years or more by reading their quaint but very uncheerful epitaphs, one of them being particularly famous as chronicling every symptom of the disease that had carried off its victim lying below; from the account it must have been a gruesome malady, and worthy the study of modern specialists.

This was not the only complaint to which our forefathers died a prey. The manse children were always picking up delicious bits of information that fell from the minister's table, proving, unknown to themselves, the maxim about little pitchers.

There was, for example, that lovely midsummer day when the minister entertained a brother clergyman and one of his elders from another parish. There were a good many jokes and anecdotes and then the conversation turned to the hilltop cemetery.

"I have an ancestor buried there," the elder announced with pride. "How do you suppose he came there?"

"Probably he was carried," was the quick rejoinder of his pastor.

"Oh, of course, of course, but that isn't what I meant," was the hasty response. "He was a Revolutionary soldier, and during the war the church was used as a smallpox hospital. He died there and was buried in the churchyard."

The news that our beloved church had been used as a smallpox hospital came upon us children as a crushing blow. It did not really seem safe to go there; if a grain of wheat can live thousands of years in the coffin of an Egyptian mummy, what are a hundred years or so to a smallpox germ? This caused us no little concern until we gathered, by means of tactfully put questions (one was always careful about interrogating older people — they so often found one's most serious problems amusing), that the church had been struck by lightning shortly after the Revo-

lution and burnt to the ground, a sanitary proceeding on the part of nature which we children much appreciated.

We used to gather up these old traditions when we were invited out to supper to some ancient farmhouse, where the table groaned under the weight of the viands. There were many of these homes that welcomed the minister's family, but among them all, the richest in associations was the house of Miss Nancy Thompson, the pride and queen of our village. The old house antedated the Revolution and made a fitting setting for the stately old lady who was its mistress. Her hair was as white as snow, her face like an old miniature, and her manners would have graced a court. She had fallen heir by right of inheritance, and personal fitness, to all the legends that our village boasted, and not only to the legends but also to the delightful sense of humor, the dignified courtesy, that was the heritage of her ancestors.

"I dined with Miss Nancy Thompson before I accepted the call to our village," the

minister was accustomed to tell his friends, "and I decided that if all the old ladies were like her, it was a most unusual place and I had better go there."

It was to Miss Nancy Thompson that Washington Irving wrote when he was compiling his life of Washington, for she had some original letters of the Commander in Chief concerning the fate of some spies whom he did not want to punish but subsequently was forced to execute. We felt that this correspondence of Miss Nancy's with one of America's greatest authors threw a luster around the whole village, and we were also firmly convinced in our own minds that if Washington Irving had ever visited our town he would have made it as famous as Sleepy Hollow, mentally adding a note that our scenery was almost as beautiful. We could boast of old Dutch ovens, too — who that has eaten apple pie cooked in a Dutch oven can ever forget it? — and pewter on our dressers, not to speak of grandfathers' clocks, for opposite Miss Nancy Thompson's colo-

nial farmhouse was the residence of Dan'l Dodd, the prince of clock makers; in fact, that section of our town was sometimes called Doddtown. If any reader, therefore, owns one of the old Dodd clocks, he should at once arise and call our village blessed.

To piece together the bits of history that cluster around our village is a far more delightful task than the making of the most intricate patchwork quilt ever featherstitched together, and it requires some of the same talents; three-cornered remnants of information have to be dovetailed with odd bits of bright-colored ribbons of imagination that reconstruct a scene out of a few facts, a dropped word, and a knowledge of the local color and the general characteristics of the inhabitants.

We are glad to state that our history begins with decent decorum about the time that David Brainerd started his mission to the Indians. We can rest assured that this missionary pioneer had the courage of his con-

victions, for we read that he was expelled from Yale for saying that one of his tutors had no more of the grace of God than a chair. One would be interested to read his comments on the present Yale faculty. The traditions of our village tell us that in the course of his wanderings he preached at a hill called by the Indians, Roxsiticus, a half mile or so from where the white church now stands. No reports are handed down to us as to the results of that discourse, but what a picture that scene must have made! The earnest, eloquent "white face," all aglow with his zeal and passion for souls, and his dusky hearers, with their dark, stolid features, unmoved and wondering, unconscious worshipers in God's most magnificent cathedral, with the arching branches making its stately aisles and the blue sky for a roof.

At about the time that David Brainerd gathered his Indians together at Roxsiticus, another preacher held a very different service some three or four miles distant from our village; this meeting, too, was held in the

open air, in a hayfield, and the pulpit was a hay cart!

There is certainly something to be said in favor of this out-of-door church; the little mounds of hay must have made far more comfortable seats than the average pew they had in those days, and none of the audience could claim exemption on the plea of worshiping God better in the open air.

It is easy to imagine what a sensation there must have been when one settler passed the word to the next that the great George Whitefield was to preach in that vicinity, and we may be sure that there was no need to urge everyone to come. The excitement that it caused cannot be compared to anything that comes to the country nowadays, unless it be the circus.

Through the wood trails, from the log cabins and down the roads from the low, white farmhouses, the people issued forth, first in little trickles of two and three, then group joining group, until in one large, eager stream they flowed together.

Our village has, fortunately, more record of Whitefield's sermon than of David Brainerd's, for we are told that as the minister reasoned with his audience about their sins — ministers were allowed to mention sins in the pulpit in those days — a little lad who sat in the hay cart burst into tears, so the good man took him up in his arms and comforted him, showing his hearers how sensitive a little child's conscience is and warning them to profit by his example. Like most traditions, this leaves us hanging in the air, for we never heard whether the people did profit or not, but judging from the sturdy, honest, God-fearing qualities of their descendants, we are justified in concluding that they did.

We pride ourselves in our village on the fact that the small frame church which was erected in the middle of the seventeenth century was the first building put up after the people's own houses were erected. In 1752 this building, together with its site, was conveyed by deed of one Edmund Burnet, of whom A. D. Mellick tells us in his delightful

book, "The Story of an Old Farm," that "though Burnet was a good man he was an evil speller, for he describes himself thus, 'Edmon Burnant of Rocksiticus, in yere county of Summerset, in east nu Jareses in Amarach.' The description of the premises is conveyed as follows, 'Scairteen pees of parsel of land on which the meeting hows now Standeth.'" Will the advocates of the new spelling kindly make a note of Edmund Burnet's simplified system?

The life of our village in those times seems to have centered almost entirely around the church, and the proper and dignified conducting of the services was an all-important matter. Imagine the stir, therefore, when Rev. Francis Peppard, whose pastorate began in 1764 or thereabouts, introduced the fashion of singing by note. Again Mr. Mellick informs us that it made a great flurry throughout the surrounding countryside and caused much offense. Elder Cummins was so indignant that he ever afterwards stalked out of church when the singing began, not re-

turning until it was over. We draw the conclusion that the minister came out victorious in this important controversy, for after that the congregation sang by note, even though the conservative element still maintained, as one writer put it, "Truly, I have a great jealousy, that if we once begin to sing by note, the next thing will be to pray by rule, preach by rule, and then comes Popery."

This dire prophecy has never yet been fulfilled; to this hour our village is free from "Popery," though I am forced to confess the dreadful fact that at present the hilltop church boasts a vested choir.

Shortly after this very radical change in singing, political discussion began to drown out the sound of religious controversy that had burned so fiercely. Rumors were heard that the colonists were not going to submit to the tax on tea and other galling impositions of George III. Opinions differed as to who was in the right, and the settlers as they gathered around the church door on Sunday mornings soon found there were some who

sided with the king against the colonies. True, the Tories were in the minority, but still they were to be reckoned with; it did not matter so much when the fighting was around Boston, but, later, reports came that Washington's armies were retreating through New Jersey and then a Tory or two was a grave danger. So the feeling of neighbor toward neighbor became tense and suspicions sprang up and the church, I fear, was not so well attended as formerly. Finally the army requisitioned the building as a smallpox hospital and the services had to be held elsewhere.

Then it was that Miss Nancy Thompson's ancestors came out strong. Her grandfather, David, and his good wife, Hannah, soon let it be known on whose side they would take their stand, and although the good Hannah had the infinitesimal family of twelve children to look after, four being stepchildren, she was never too busy to feed and lodge the soldiers when they wandered up from their camp a few miles distant. Everyone knows

these brave fellows' plight, how often they were hungry and how many of them had no shoes, and it is pleasant to think of this hospitable farmhouse with its open door ever ready to receive them.

The old house was a busy place, teeming with children, but even the eight-year-olds were not too small to knit for the soldiers, and the big iron cooking pots were always on the cranes in the fireplace, filled with steaming food for them. The good Hannah was surely a spiritual ancestor of the Red Cross workers in the late World War.

If only it were possible with cold type to give the atmosphere of the gray-stone house of the Thompsons as it stands halfway back from the street, framed by the trees. Like many individuals, it has in the course of time been forced to change its front, for when it was erected it faced the main road to Philadelphia which went past what is now the back of the house, so that in the days of Hannah and David it not only faced that highway but the lovely view of hill and dale,

In Revolutionary Days this side of the Thompson Homestead faced the Road to Philadelphia

upon which it has been forced to turn its back in order to be on the new street, now some seventy-five years of age.

It is a typical Revolutionary farmhouse, with its handmade staples and woodwork, its old white stairway, its nineteen rooms running straight through the house, its wide attics under dark old rafters, its dormer windows, and its spinning wheels hidden in the corner, all whispering the story of colonial times without the need of a history textbook.

The Thompson homestead is not the only house that breathed the romance of other days, as the manse children could have told you. The recipe for getting a delicious thrill from the last-named house is not so simple as it sounds. You must come upon it unawares, driving out on it from the woods, and seeing it stand in its lonely clearing, just at dusk when the owls begin to hoot, and have your mother, who sits beside you on the back seat of the carriage, tell the story in her simple, graphic fashion. You must never

have heard the story before if you wish to get its full flavor.

"Ah, here is the house of the girl who was chased by the soldiers," your father will say, pointing with his whip to the shadowy building.

"What soldiers?" you ask pricking up your ears at the thought of a possible story.

"Why the Revolutionary soldiers," your mother remarks casually, as though they were an everyday topic of conversation. "You know Washington's army spent two winters in camp a mile or more from here. We will show you the remains of their camp fires some day. Our poor soldiers were short of every kind of supply, food, clothes, and firearms. The order to march south was soon to be given and so the officers commanded their men to go out through the countryside and see if they could find horses at some of the farms near by. As two or three of the soldiers were walking along the road, they heard the sound of some one coming on horseback. Turning, they saw a very pretty girl

riding a beautiful horse; as she passed, one of the soldiers seized the bridle and asked her whose horse it was.

"'Mine,' answered the girl proudly, thinking that they were admiring her pet's beauty.

"'Well, you must dismount; we want it for the army,' was the startling reply.

"When Tempe Wick (for this was indeed the famous Tempe Wick) realized that she was in danger of losing her pet, all the patriotic thoughts she had disappeared, and giving the horse a slash with her whip, she dashed off into the woods with the soldiers in hot pursuit. On reaching home she did not pause but slipping to the ground she led the horse into the house, straight into the parlor, and on into her bedroom beyond, whose only door opened into the parlor. The soldiers came up to the house and searched the grounds but they never thought of looking in a lady's bedroom for a horse. Legend says that Tempe Wick kept her pet hidden for three weeks until the soldiers marched off down Trenton way."

By the time the story is finished, night has fallen, and in the darkness you strain your ears for the sound of a horse's hoof or the shouts of the following soldiers; a hundred and more years have vanished as though they had never been. Of course, you can go home and read the story delightfully told by Frank Stockton, but wouldn't you infinitely prefer to hear it related in the dusk of a woods road by your mother's voice?

A large flat tombstone marks the grave of Tempe Wick. Not far off Revolutionary soldiers sleep in the old cemetery back of hill-top church; the Thompson homestead, the burnt-out camp fires on the hillside, and the old gray house in the grassy clearing, are constant reminders of how they fought the battles of freedom for you and for me. Do you wonder that our village secretly longs for some Washington Irving to perpetuate our heroes' memory?

Chapter III

OLD JOHN

THE MANSE stood on a hillside whose summit the white church crowned. Noted preachers have spoken from its pulpit, men whose names were well known throughout the land. Others have written of them with eloquence; they have no need of praise of mine. Instead I would pay my tribute to humble John, the minister's man of all work. I do this the more readily because of late it has become the fashion to regard all servants as grasping and unreasonable, whereas I have almost invariably found them faithful and loyal.

Perched as it was near the crest of a hill, our village was celebrated for the purity of its air, so that during the sultry days of July and August city visitors sought refuge among us. There were always a handful of business

men and their families, a society leader, a few "flappers," numberless nurses with their young charges, and "the General." "The General" usually appeared when the daisies whitened our meadows. He was our most distinguished visitor, for village children read with awe his name in the school histories — it was not every village that could boast a real live hero! I can see him now as he stalked along our street, some four feet in advance of his wife. His every look betrayed why the rebels had retreated when they saw him coming.

Once a day all these strangers within our gates would trail up the maple-shaded path to admire the view from the hilltop; the view was worth admiring, but it was a matter of conjecture whether it was a love of nature that caused them to make this pilgrimage or because it was the only diversion that our quiet village afforded. Their way lay beside the manse garden, and every passer paused in his ascent to take a whiff of the roses — it was often more than a whiff — that climbed

temptingly near the fence. They admired the roses, but cast only a contemptuous glance at the bent figure of a man working in one corner — a partner in the "glory of the garden."

It must be confessed that old John's corduroy trousers covered with good honest soil, cardigan jacket, red bandanna handkerchief, old clay pipe, and unkempt whiskers were not the livery of gentility, but the badge of the humble laborer. John was an eclectic where work was concerned; he milked the cow, harnessed the horse, plowed the field, mowed the lawn, gathered the fruit, turned the ice-cream freezer, and did everything else that was asked of him, doing all indifferently well, his only real gift being in the care of the garden. He had received his training in the market gardens of London, where he had been apprenticed in his youth. To see him set out young plants was a revelation, his coarse fingers handling the delicate roots as gently as a woman would give a caress, his light touch betraying the other

nature that lay dormant under the rough exterior, for —

"There's not a pair of legs so thin, there's not a head so thick,
There's not a hand so weak and white, nor yet a heart so sick,
But it can find some needful job that's crying to be done —
For the Glory of the Garden glorifieth every one."

Outside observers who were not gifted with a keen perception of the laws of cause and effect were amazed at John's power of sleep. He would doze sweetly while he turned the ice-cream freezer, and more audibly when, in his Sunday clothes, he drove us to the railway station, some seven miles distant, being the butt the while of many of our childish jokes.

"Look at John," we would nudge each other and say.

"'Bless the boy, he's asleep again!'" another would quote with a giggle, and proceed to enliven the drive by tickling the back of John's neck with a straw.

The sight of John dozing away on the front of the farm wagon was so familiar that at

length no one commented on it, although first and last he caused much joy to our village wits.

John's appetite, too, was amazing; to see him sit with a plate of potatoes heaped high in front of him and watch them disappear into his capacious mouth, helped thither by his knife, was a sight that I remember with astonishment.

Made cowards by conscience, we had a very wholesome dread of John, and if, when we were teasing him, he turned and pretended to give chase, we fled in terror, not knowing that in his innermost heart John had a very soft spot for the minister's children.

John had his own aversions, for he could never be brought to view with tranquillity snakes and toads; they were unknown in his Emerald Isle, and when he chanced upon a snake wending its tortuous way to the ice-house his terror was pathetic. A manifestation of the Devil, he considered it, putting it behind him as fast as his bowed legs could carry him.

John had few diversions. He could neither read nor write; he was as ignorant as any immigrant who has sought our shores; the daily paper was as Greek to him. He was a kind father and a devout son of the Roman Catholic Church, but otherwise his life was pitiful in the narrowness of its outlook. Faber might almost have been speaking of him when he wrote:

> "What does God get from him?
> His mind is very dim,
> Too weak to love and too obtuse to fear.
> Is there glory in his strife?
> Is there meaning in his life?
> Can God hold such a thing-like person dear?"

John, however, was kept from being absolutely commonplace by his affection for his master. In John's eyes "the minister" could do no wrong, and his word was as the laws of the Medes and Persians, that could not be altered. John was not alone in his devotion, for our entire village was one in the love that it gave the parson, since there was scarcely a home in it where he had not been

with words of comfort and of cheer. Early in the morning and in the blackest midnight, in winter blizzard and summer heat, the minister's horse might have been found toiling down the country roads, and, no matter at what hour of the night the minister returned, John would be standing, lantern in hand, waiting at the gate to meet him.

Year in and year out, master and man faithfully performed their services, until at length, worn out by the hardness of the life, the minister's health broke down and he was ordered West for a long rest.

Great was the consternation throughout our village. Men and women vied with one another to see who could best prove affection. Only John's love was mute; his was not the variety that is ever eloquent. He could show it only by an even greater attention to his master's every wish.

The last good-by said, the last duty done, John returned home, but his life had broken loose from its moorings. He would not take any permanent work, for he lived in the hope

of his master's return, so instead he worked out by the day. Our village critics who had carped at John's slowness, wondering how the minister stood his pottering ways, had now a chance to learn his real worth, and their scorn was turned to praise. Two years passed in this manner, and all the time John lived on his hopes; but, alas! when the minister returned, it was only to be laid at rest among the hills near the people he had so greatly loved. John would never again wait at the gate for his master.

The evening the sad news came John and his wife were having their prayers together, and the wife began to pray that God would give rest to the minister's soul.

"What do you mean," John's angry voice sounded, "by praying for the minister's soul? Don't you know that he's safe in heaven?"

After this sad time John seemed to lose his old vigor; his hope removed, his strength declined, and he pined for the days that were gone — the more perhaps that his sorrow was inarticulate.

Another twelve months passed and March heralded her coming by a famous blizzard; in the midst of the storm word was received from the city that the minister's fair-haired daughter, the village darling, had fallen a victim to diphtheria. The snow lay deep among the hills, it was bitter cold, and the wind howled mournfully; the ground was frozen many feet deep, and volunteers were called for to dig the little grave. In addition to his general feebleness, old John was suffering from a severe cold, and his wife did her best to persuade him not to go; but it was the call of love and duty. He felt that his master had need of him; nothing could hold him back.

It was John's last day's work, for pneumonia set in and he put up a losing battle; it seemed as if he knew that his master needed him no longer.

"Look at this, and think that Jesus died on the cross for you," said John's son holding a crucifix before his dying eyes.

"Jesus, Jesus!" whispered the old man as he closed his eyes forever.

In this manner passed old John, the man of all work, the minister's faithful friend, whose greatest talent lay in doing as he was told.

"Thus did he live his life,
A kind of passive strife,
Upon the God within, his soul relying;
Men left him all alone,
Because he was unknown,
But he heard the angels sing when he was dying.

"God judges by a light
Which baffles mortal sight,
And the useless-seeming man the crown has won;
In his vast world above,
A world of broader love,
God has some grand employment for his son."

Chapter IV

CLERICAL NOTES

THE HOUSEHOLDS of conscientious Presbyterians forty or fifty years ago, let us say, had a certain rigidity, due mainly to the starch of Puritanism —" so ran an article in a recent number of the Atlantic Monthly. Then the writer went on to describe how the minister and his family, but particularly the minister, unbent only at Thanksgiving time or Christmas. After describing the toys that the minister had made in secret with his own hands, the writer commented as follows: "How it was done is a mystery. It had no relation to reality — to the life of a Presbyterian minister, a theologian, and a disciplinarian. It seemed to indicate, even in our puppy-dog stage, that something must be confining, must be restricting in a very serious manner, a charac-

ter that otherwise would have been the freest, the most happy, and the most companionable in the world. It was a misfortune that in some instances was tragic. And yet if I could be a boy again, I should choose to be a boy in that house."

If I could be a girl again, I would choose to be a little girl in a Presbyterian manse, but for far different reasons. Alas, and alack, what a dreary picture this writer gives of his particular family, and how unfair it is to the life of the Presbyterian manse as a whole! Would that I had a magic carpet and could transfer this person with the gloomy memories back to the manse as we knew it over thirty years ago and have him meet the jolly crowd of Presbyterian clergymen that often gathered around our table, allowing him to listen to their anecdotes of bygone ministers, or let him loose some stormy evening among the manse children when they were playing menagerie with their father, when he took the leading part of kangaroo or giraffe. The writer might then have a different story to

tell about the "dreary" effect of Puritan Presbyterianism.

Our village with its white church on the hilltop, its old brick manse, and its incomparable view, has lived its life like many quiet country places unmarked by the historian or antiquarian, yet for over two hundred years it has helped to make history and literature, too, for the famous linguist, Dr. Elias Riggs, not only spent a part of his early life there but also showed his opinion of the intellectual attainments of our village belles by choosing his bride from among them.

We are told that at the early age of nine he started his study of Greek and at thirteen he took up Hebrew. At the time of his death he was familiar with nineteen languages and had a bowing acquaintance with as many more. With all those languages at his finger tips how could he help translating the Bible into Armenian, Bulgarian, and Turkish? It was thus that our village bore a modest part in influencing the modern literature of three races.

Other prominent men have been educated in our village at Dr. Fairchild's school, now nothing but a memory; and many of the clergymen who have been pastors of the white church have since become famous for their oratory.

In those days the intellectual life of the village centered around the school and the manse; our shoes might be shabby and our hats out of date, but we were always surrounded by books, and the minister's library was a strong factor in the life of the community.

The manse was a rendezvous for all the clergymen of the presbytery, and I, for one, know of no better fun than to have been born in a minister's family and to have picked up the anecdotes that gathered around the old house, or the stories of men and of books that were recounted at the manse table, for search the wide world over one can nowhere find a merrier set of conversationalists than a party of clergymen when they relax with congenial spirits.

The good dinners our mother used to serve may have had something to do with it, for the greater part were drawn from the manse garden; the jellies, salad dressing, and whipped cream were not taken out of jars prepared by the manufacturer but were made by the minister's wife herself. All I can say is that the day before ministers' meeting the manse children found the kitchen the most attractive spot in the house. The ice cream was made from real cream from our own Jersey cow and the strawberries would have been called "sunkist" in these days for they were larger and sweeter than any that one could buy in the market. Old John, the minister's man, saw to that; he knew what kind of berry God meant the strawberry to be.

After the soup had taken off the first pangs of hunger, and the roast chicken had begun to fall apart at the touch of the minister's carving knife, the fun would begin.

"That was a very heated discussion that we had this morning over the first candidate. I have never seen the presbytery take so

long or be so wordy," the minister remarked on one memorable occasion as he deftly cut the drumstick from a plump chicken. "I grew so tired that I went into the cemetery for a breath of air and I found old Mr. Bardwell sitting on a tombstone; 'What is the matter; are you ill?' I asked anxiously. 'Oh, no,' he replied gravely, 'but they don't talk here!' And I knew just how he felt."

So did all the other ministers apparently, from the shout that followed this sally, and the ball was quickly caught up by one of the guests.

"This manse must have been quite a stirring place when old Dr. Samuel Hanson Cox lived here," said a venerable guest. "You know he had ten children and his son, Bishop Cox, was born in this house. Judging by the father, they must have been a lively crowd."

"As we are all Presbyterians I can tell one of the stories about him," replied our minister. "One day he was asked how many children he had and he answered, 'Ten; five of them are wise and five of them are Epis-

copalians.' My people have never forgotten how he tried to set some of the boiled eggs left over from the breakfast table, under a hen. He wasn't so good a farmer as he was a preacher; in the pulpit he was unsurpassed."

"I have been told," said the venerable guest, again taking his turn, "that once Bishop Cox remarked to his father that he would like to have him preach for him but that he had some doubts about his ordination. I am afraid if it had been left to the Cox family there would have been little hope of Church union. Things look brighter nowadays; that kind of denominational bickering is becoming recognized as unchristian."

"Did you ever hear of Dr. Cox's original way of praying? Everything he did was original for that matter." The minister's wife now took her turn, from her end of the table. "At a meeting of synod I heard him pray, 'Let us all be united, an *e pluribus unum* church."

After the laugh had subsided, the minister's wife again took the floor. "However,

we owe Dr. Cox a great deal; a friend has told me of a meeting of the American Board which she attended in the days when the New School Presbyterians supported the American Board. It was the annual meeting and the Board had closed the year with a debt of sixty thousand dollars. It seemed a very great debt to the missionary leaders and it had brought its depressing influence into the meeting; but William E. Dodge was there and his courageous spirit was helping to change the atmosphere. Then suddenly Dr. Cox rose up and with a loud voice as if calling to a great distance he exclaimed: 'Who art thou, O great mountain of sixty thousand dollars? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.' And to all intents and purposes it did."

"Speaking of Dr. Cox and his benediction reminds me of Dr. McCosh's famous prayer at Princeton," volunteered another clergyman. "My boys tell me that one day at chapel he forgot to give out a notice that the second German class had changed its

hour of recitation, so, knowing that the students rushed out directly after the benediction, he finished his prayer in this manner: 'And, O Lord, we ask thee to bless this great and noble institution of learning, its students here gathered together and not only them but the faculty, especially the assistant professor of German, whose class will meet at half after nine this morning instead of ten o'clock as usual.'"

In this way our dinner would proceed until the dessert was finished and the ministers would be forced to push their chairs back and hurry away to another two hours of solemn conclave at the church, and I have no doubt the afternoon session went more smoothly for the good dinner and the laugh that was served with all the courses.

It was not only at the manse you picked up these titbits about well-known men who had been born or had sojourned in our neighborhood. Our village took a just pride in its past and if you had the time and tact you could draw from white-haired old ladies

stories of other times; for old villages, like old families that are to the manner born, do not feel it needful to shriek their pedigree to every newcomer. To do this properly you must have some time together; twenty-minute calls were correct between next-door neighbors only when one ran in to borrow a cup of flour or an egg; for formal calls you must stay an hour; but when you went to visit a friend you took your sewing and spent the long hours of a summer afternoon in cozy chat. The queen of the village old ladies was Miss Nancy Thompson whose Revolutionary ancestry, and the fact that she was as hard to locate as a humming bird, (for she often flitted away on visits without saying good-by), made her reminiscences doubly valuable.

When you visited Miss Nancy you were treated with a courtesy that charmed you on the spot, and as the acquaintance grew the spell would grow more potent. Having discussed the weather and the latest presidential candidate — but never health, that subject

was tabooed by delicate Miss Nancy — you skillfully turned the conversation to the view from the hilltop church; then by easy stages you asked about the various ministers and then, indifferently, whether it was true that Dr. Thomas Hastings had once been pastor there.

"Oh, yes, my dear," Miss Nancy would reply. "His wife was a cousin of mine. The hilltop church was his first pastorate. I can remember him well and the sermons that he preached; they were very fine, but I never guessed how famous he was to become. They say that even now when he is president of Union Seminary [this was sometime in the eighties], he often refers to his first charge and tells the students anecdotes about our village. When he first came here he was much astonished to hear the farmers quote Greek and Latin when they talked to him. You see they were educated at Mr. Fairchild's well-known school, and were drilled in the classics as well as in manners — Mr. Fairchild took care of that. If they came down untidy to break-

fast with unblacked shoes he would tell them, 'You are very slovenly; go to Mrs. Fairchild and have your shoes blacked,' and the boy, hanging his head in shame, would go, never to repeat this offense; or in case of more serious faults he would send him down the hill to the minister with whom he had an agreement. The minister received the culprit in silence and had him sit in the study beside him while he wrote his Sunday sermon, but he never spoke to the boy or allowed the boy to speak to him. It seemed to work well in those days, judging from the results."

"Is Dr. Hastings an interesting teacher?" you ask, going back to your former subject.

"Indeed he is," with an emphatic nod of the head. "He teaches the young men a great deal that does not come out of books, at least not out of theological books. Many of his pupils, though worthy enough I dare say, have come from plain families and their manners are not above reproach. Dr. Hastings has to give frequent talks on etiquette. I remember that once he was lecturing to a

class on pulpit gestures and he warned his students to be careful how they used them. He told the story of a young minister, who was preaching as a candidate, who pointed directly at a woman who was sitting below and said in strident tones, "Is your old man dead?" Now the woman had recently lost her husband and she was not only startled but indignant at being addressed in this fashion. Needless to say, the young man did not get the call."

How delightfully Miss Nancy laughs at this story! The dear lady seems quite unaware how Presbyterian ministers were to be pitied for the something that was "confining" or "restricting" them.

"I remember Dr. Hastings told us that once he was speaking in prayer meeting when his father, the hymn writer, was in the front pew," Miss Nancy would continue. "Dr. Hastings gave out a hymn and said, 'We will omit the verse that reads, "Grief and sorrow, pain and woe, darken all our earthly joys," because I don't believe it':

then he glanced down and saw that the hymn was written by his own father. 'Oh, forgive me, father,' he continued impulsively, 'I did not know that you wrote that hymn.' 'That's all right, my son,' his father responded, 'I don't believe it now myself.'"

By this time the shadows are lengthening under the elm trees on the lawn, so you are forced to fold up your work and bid a reluctant farewell to sweet Miss Nancy and her fascinating reminiscences. She looks like a picture framed by the old doorway, as you turn at the gate to wave a last good-by; and with a sigh of contentment over the good time you have had, and regret at the thought that the next time she may have flitted to some fortunate relative, you hurry your footsteps to almost a run, for the manse supper hour is six o'clock. Nevertheless, the day being warm and the walk long, you simply cannot resist stopping a minute at the squire's to beg a drink at the well. There the water is so clear and cool as it comes up in the bucket that, with never a thought of

microbes, you drink deep drafts from a tin dipper.

By this time the bright eyes of the squire's invalid wife have spied you from the window; she is the village saint who bears her years of suffering with never a murmur. You simply must not pass without a word with her, and of course an invitation to tea follows; but without permission from headquarters you feel that this is impossible, so you hurry off again and in a minute your hasty walk quickens to a run, for you see the village stage lumbering up to the post office and know that six o'clock has struck.

"Where in the world have you been?" is the first question to greet you as you enter the dining room where the rest of the family are already gathered around the supper table.

"At Miss Nancy Thompson's," you pant, knowing that no other explanation is necessary. "Please pass the bread. I am famished; you mustn't expect me to talk for at least five minutes."

These are the recollections that cluster

around our village, that could boast, if it would, of the fact that men like William E. Dodge, Vice Chancellor Pitney, Dr. Theodore Cuyler, and many others had been educated under the shade of its maples, in the old school on the hill.

When I think back over the years, my memory is rich in racy anecdotes, and some more serious, about the ministers of an older period. May I add one more personal reminiscence before I close my defense? It is about the first and last time that I ever heard Dr. Cuyler preach. The large auditorium at Northfield was packed with several hundred students from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and other eastern colleges and universities. Dr. Cuyler arose, gray and bent with the weight of his eighty years upon him. When the tottering figure stepped forward, one wondered what message this aged man could have for the young life of the country.

"I always like to speak to college men," his trumpet tones, untouched by age, rang out to the far corner of the building, and his

youthful audience clapped. "Why? Because I'm a college man myself!" (Loud clapping with a few cheers.) "What college? Princeton!" (At that all the Princeton men sprang to their feet and gave their college cheer over and over again.) "What class? Forty-one," (Wild cheers from all the colleges apparently, and in unison for at least three minutes.) It was some time before the applause died away so that the old man could go on with his sermon, but when he did, he had secured his audience's attention and it did not waver throughout his masterly appeal. One understood then what he had meant when he had told a friend, "I would not change places with the Angel Gabriel before the throne, as long as I could preach the gospel." During the week that followed his address, one never saw the old man walk out alone; there was always a group of admiring college men with him, like flies around a honey-pot.

The men of Dr. Cuyler's generation are all gone; the places that these sturdy pioneers

took in our village life have never been filled; but what we like best to remember about them was their straightforward, simple integrity, their lovable humanness, and, last but not least, their unfailing sense of humor.

Chapter V

NEIGHBORS

I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul remembering my good friends.

— Shakspere

"LOVE your neighbors but be careful of your neighborhood," John Hay is reported to have once laughingly remarked. No one ever needed such a warning about our village. Tucked away as it was among the hills, seven miles from the railway, it formed a little world of its own — a world in which kindly deeds and hospitable acts were the general rule of life and taken as much as a matter of course as the pure, fine air we breathed.

It is a wonderful experience to spend one's early days in a place where love and good will surround one; where one never enters a door that one does not receive a hearty wel-

come, where the cheery hosts are as glad to see one as they say they are, and where one cannot get away under an hour's call. It is not strange that city manners strike those brought up in such an environment as unpleasantly as an ice-cold bath.

City visitors were at no pains to conceal the fact that they considered our village very dull. They did not realize that our neighbors were too busy to find time to be dull or discontented. If one rises at half past four and works every available minute until sundown, a sewing society will be a much desired variation and a Sunday-school picnic the wildest kind of dissipation. We were fortunate, too, in having in our midst a worthy successor to Mrs. Malaprop, who added very much spice to our social events.

"What did 'Mrs. Malaprop' say to-day?" would be the first question put by less fortunate members of the family, who had been forced to stay at home, on one's return from the Ladies' Aid Society. The answer was sure to bring a laugh.

"I never linger in the vestipool after church, but always make a dee line for home," she was reported to have once remarked. Another time she thus described a visit to a cousin: "Yes, we went all the way in the new phantom [phaeton]. It was such a pretty place at the end of a long 'rusty' lane, and the front of the house had hysteria all over it; such a beautiful vine, too!"

Once, when asked where her husband was, she replied, "He could not come; he had an absurd in his ear." No, life was never monotonous where "Mrs. Malaprop" was.

Although we often repeated and laughed at "Mrs. Malaprop's" remarks, we never laughed at her, for we all admired her kindly ways and her hospitable soul. Her home was ours while we were there, and she proved it to us by serving at her suppers the thirteen different kinds of cake for which she was deservedly famous.

It is an easy thing to describe our "Mrs. Malaprop's" quaint sayings or make the reader's mouth water with a description of

her cream layer cake, but it needs a subtler touch than mine to paint the atmosphere of true brotherliness in which our village neighbors lived.

No sooner had the young minister and his wife taken their first meal in the manse than they began to be conscious of this feeling of good fellowship.

"We heard your range had broken down, so, as I was baking to-day, I brought you these rolls," said a neighbor, laying a parcel of deliciously light rolls on the table in the dining room.

The plumbers, it must be confessed, were no more satisfactory then than they are now, and it took some time to have the range mended; during all the distressing period known as "settling," our neighbors kept the newcomers supplied with bread or whatever else was needed. The farmers brought the firewood from their own woodlands and hauled all the coal from the railway station without being willing to be paid for their labor.

"Here is a basket of peaches," or "a barrel of

apples," they would say, as the case might be. "We thought you might enjoy them," and would leave hastily for fear of being thanked.

As the years went by the family at the manse increased until the house was full to overflowing; so were our mother's hands. In these modern times she would have tried to find a mother's helper — if she could have afforded one; in our village she did not need one, as a dear neighbor always appeared at the psychological moment.

"The minister told me the 'presbytery' was coming to-morrow, and I knew you might like help with the cakes and desserts," she was accustomed to remark as she tied on her apron. "Send the children down to our house; mother will love to have them." And she meant it.

This neighbor was not an idler; she arose at half past four every morning to make butter and get the early breakfast for her father. She and her sisters nursed their helpless invalid mother, who never walked a step without their assistance. One of the daugh-

ters was constantly at her mother's side to move her hands when she grew weary of one position. Two of the sisters were busy all day long teaching, yet they were never too busy to give a helping hand to a friend if they knew that help was needed.

There is no scientific instrument invented that could measure the influence that went out from that invalid mother's chair. No one ever heard her complain; she had a sweet smile, a cheery word for all, and was always ready to spare her daughters on their errands of mercy. One Fourth of July these friends invited the manse children to spend the day with them.

"Be sure not to set your firecrackers off where they will disturb Mrs. C——," they were admonished as they ran eagerly away.

Later in the day, when our mother strolled down the street to see how the children were faring, her horror was great to see them putting off firecrackers on their neighbor's front path while the invalid sat on the porch near them.

"Children, children, remember what I told you!" the mother cried, anxiously.

"Yes, mother, we did," we answered. "We didn't send any off for a long time, and then Mrs. C—— asked us when we were going to fire off our crackers, and to please hurry up, because she liked to hear us."

The sad summer when scarlet fever visited the manse our village neighbors refused to be frightened; instead, the well children found refuge with them until it was safe to return home, and, trained nurses being unknown, other friends volunteered to sit up with the fever victims. Some city visitors, by way of contrast, refused even to walk on the same side of the street where the manse stood, but, like the priest and Levite of old, walked hastily by on the other side, holding their pocket handkerchiefs firmly to their patrician noses.

It was not only the young and active people who showed their neighborliness, for one winter a dear old lady well past eighty decided that the minister's equipment could

not possibly be complete without a silk patchwork quilt; so the old hands went to work and featherstitched and basted and planned until a quaint silk quilt lay on her bed ready for inspection. Another old lady heard rumors of this, and was not to be outdone.

"If the minister has a quilt, his wife shall have one, too. Mine shall be a log-cabin design," she explained with an air of superiority. Log cabins being a new variety, we were all duly impressed, and before long hers was ready for our admiration.

In this way the years passed, marked only by friendly deeds. For his part, the minister never spared himself if any were in need; no storm or illness could keep him from their side. In one of his long drives on a blustery winter's night he caught a cold that brought on a lingering illness. Word came to his neighbors that he must leave our village, at least for a season, and they could scarcely credit it, but when it was confirmed they went to work to make the moving as easy as

possible, and his parishioners assured him that at any minute he wished to return he would find the manse in readiness.

The sojourn in the West was a real exile to the minister and his wife; they constantly pined for the love and sympathy that had surrounded them these many years. Letters and gifts came frequently, bearing messages full of cheer and understanding. A traveler brought word to the village that there was a great dearth of fruit in Minnesota — this was before the days of refrigerator cars — and when our neighbors heard of this want they set to work at once to supply it. Two barrels of beautiful canned fruit, such as only farmers' wives know how to put up, were collected from the congregation and sent to the minister as a Christmas gift.

The doctors at last agreed that the minister's case was hopeless, and ordered him to return home at once; but he never saw our village again. His people laid him to rest behind the white church on the hill, in the choicest spot they could find, a place where

in his lifetime he had often stood, watching the lights and shadows that chased across the hills he so dearly loved. Then one of his congregation, who remembered that, in a sermon preached long before, he had spoken of the lowly flowers — sweet alyssum, lilies of the valley, pansies, and mignonette — as being characteristic of Christian character, planted them on his grave.

When our mother sent to the village storekeeper to consult him about keeping the plot in order, he offered to do it himself and absolutely refused any remuneration.

"Mrs. W—— thought I would take pay for keeping her husband's grave in order!" he told his family later, with tears standing in his eyes.

It is indeed a difficult task to describe accurately events that occurred so many years ago, for one feels that the mist of time magnifies or softens each incident until we lose our sense of proportion, making it easy to give a wrong impression. I had wondered to myself while writing these reminiscences

THE BEAUTIFUL RAVINE WHERE THE SHY ARBUTUS HIDES ITSELF

if I had unwittingly exaggerated our neighbor's kindliness, when a strange answer came to quiet these doubts. Yesterday a little pasteboard box arrived, postmarked from our village. Within, carefully wrapped in wax paper, was a fragrant bunch of trailing arbutus. The delicate perfume brought back vividly the wooded hillside of a beautiful ravine where every spring the minister was accustomed to take his children to hunt for the shy little blossoms.

"I have found it! I have found it!" they would call, as they discovered a cluster hidden under a rock or in some crevice.

Yes, thirty years have passed, but even yet there are faithful hearts in our village who bear in mind those happy days.

A bowl of the starlike blossoms stands beside me as I write, wafting with their gentle fragrance pleasant memories of a time and place where deeds of kindness were done with no thought of their money equivalent. The flowers bring a message that, in the good time of reconstruction that we hope is before

us, there will be many villages — yes, even cities, too — that will manifest the same spirit of love and true neighborliness so characteristic of our village thirty years or more ago.

Chapter VI

POVERTY AND RICHES

WE NEVER considered ourselves poor in our village. I think it was the view that wrought this contentment — it most assuredly was not our long bank accounts. "The View," as we always spoke of it, was our choicest possession, weaving its silent, magic spell around us. Travelers did not need to tell us that it was fine; we were firmly assured that it could not be surpassed east of the Alleghanies; as for the unknown regions of the Rockies we would not presume to speak, but in our own minds we had strong convictions upon the subject.

"Have you seen 'the View'?" our guests would be asked the morning after their arrival, and, breakfast over, we hurried them away as though we feared that they might

drop dead before they had seen it — in that case, having lived in vain.

We often spoke our pity for town dwellers, who amid the roar and bustle of urban life were cut off from the sweet, fresh country air and the vision of our hills with the early dew upon them. Every Sunday morning we wound our way up the path that led to the white church, forgetting the weariness of the ascent as the minister talked to us simply of earthly duties and heavenly mysteries, making us realize without being told that he was the friend of God; then he would dismiss us with his fatherly benediction, and we would pass out to the church porch, where the peace of the hills that God had made confirmed the truths that the minister had tried to teach.

No one could feel poor in our springtime when the pink of the peach and apple orchards lay like soft clouds on every hill and in all the little valleys, or in autumn when the hospitable farmers asked us to an early supper and took us into the orchards full of rosy peaches, only saying, laconically, "Help

yourselves." The groaning supper table looked anything but poverty-stricken, with its snowy cloth covered with dishes of crab-apple and quince jelly, thin slices of ham and chicken, potato salad, and plates piled high with hot biscuits and several kinds of layer cake, which our kind hostess had made with her own hands.

Germs had not been discovered in those happy days, so the farmer had fewer problems; the cows gave quantities of rich milk, the like of which we never see now that we have become intelligent and insist that the men wear white when they are milking and tie up the cows' tails with pink ribbon as a token of their cleanliness.

True, our hosts grumbled more or less about dry weather or wet, early frost and winter blight — it has always been the farmer's prerogative to grumble — but they would have resented pity, for every farmhouse had a view from its windows that the king at Windsor might have envied, and they had the fear of God in their hearts.

Their more adventurous sons might seek a varied career, but the parents only asked to be allowed to live on peacefully in the home of their ancestors.

It must be confessed, however, that our pity for the dwellers in the city was repaid to us with interest. Our summer visitors hardly veiled the disdain they felt for the simple village folk, and walked our streets with a lordly air of possession that tickled our sense of humor, for we were not dull. Could they have heard the shrewd comments made upon them, they would often have been surprised. Our men might be farmers and their wives wear clothes decidedly out of date, but a goodly number had been well educated, they had studied Latin and Greek, the latest magazines lay on their tables, and they knew a gentleman when they saw him, for they were gentlemen themselves.

Our sense of humor stood us in good stead in some trying situations. The boarders (as we were wont to call our summer visitors) felt that they could not exist throughout the

summer months without a church of their own denomination, although our small village already boasted a Methodist, a Roman Catholic, and two Presbyterian churches. They went to work, and by dint of many fairs, bazaars, and plays, and with help from their own Mission Board, they built a church. The ministers of all the other churches were invited to attend the dedication. These visiting clergymen were given seats of honor, listening with interest to the beautiful service; their interest, however, gave way to astonishment when they heard the reverend dean who was leading the service, say, in moving tones:

"It is sad to think that, though more than eighteen hundred years have passed since the death of Christ, this is the first time there has ever been a church in this little village." Never had a sense of humor been so needed among us, for the white church of whose history our village was so justly proud had crowned the summit of the hill for a hundred years. Fortunately, our amusement soon

conquered any feeling of resentment; but, strange to say, the new church was never frequented by village people, and a bare handful made up its winter congregation.

Faultfinders took exception to our distance from the railway. "Seven miles from the station! Why, how do you ever exist?" business men and society women would ask in voices of condescension. We would never admit that this distance was a disadvantage, except perhaps to one another in the winter and spring when snowdrifts towered over our heads or our wheels sunk in mud up to the hubs; then we would casually speak of how nice it would be "when we get the railway." To outsiders one felt it necessary to point out the fact that when one lived in a village, infinitely preferred to any other place in the world, one did not care to travel.

The minister and his wife were too busy over important matters to be more than vaguely conscious of city pride and village prejudice. In these modern times we sigh for the leisurely ways of a past generation,

but the minister's wife, who made all the undergarments and did the mending for six husky children, who did up the fruit each season, who made the dessert and cake every day, who entertained minister's meetings and sewing circles, who led missionary societies and paid calls with her husband in the afternoons, might have felt her life fairly complex even in those Utopian days; nevertheless, no one ever heard her complain.

One evening, the end of a matchless spring day, our mother laboriously climbed into the village stage, which was to take her home after a visit to relatives in the city. The stage driver gave her a deferential welcome — the whole village respected the minister's wife — and helped her to stow away her knobby parcels. On seating herself she noticed that there was only one other occupant of the stage, a comparative stranger who had only recently settled in our village.

"It is a terribly tiresome ride," complained the stranger. "After the railway journey it seems endless."

"Oh, do you think so?" brightly answered our mother. "My husband and I enjoy every step of the way, the country is so lovely."

"Yes, the country is very beautiful," reluctantly admitted the stranger. "But I do not understand why you should love it — they all say you work so hard. Why, they tell me you have six children! How do you ever stand it?"

"I have my compensations," quietly replied our mother. She was a reserved woman, not willing to index and ticket all her emotions for the curious eye of an unresponsive acquaintance.

After this the conversation languished, as there seemed no common ground to meet upon. How could the stranger know that the mother's heart was beating fast at the thought of soon seeing all her children? At length they reached the summit of a hill from which one first sees the spire of the white church pointing the weary traveler skyward.

"Ah, there's the hilltop church!" exclaimed our mother. "The children always try to see which can be the first to spy it. It seems to me it has the most beautiful situation of any church in the country."

"Yes," returned her companion, cordially. "It is wonderful how many miles away you can see it! It seems a sort of symbol, somehow."

They went on again for another mile, and then they reached the end of the village street. There they saw the figure of a boy running down the hill toward them; as the stage approached he stopped, eagerly scanning the vehicle for some one, and when he caught sight of our mother his face brightened and he smiled radiantly.

"Mother, mother!" he shouted. "Oh, I was afraid you had not come!" The kindly driver stopped the horses and the boy climbed into the stage.

"Oh, mother, I got 'A' in Latin yesterday, and we have a new baby calf." The ladies

laughed at his earnestness, but he was too excited to notice.

At the post office the stage again stopped, and on the platform stood a half-grown girl. She handed her mother a rose she was holding.

"Here's the first rose, mother. I begged it from old John. I am so glad you've come, we have missed you dreadfully, and I have made my bed every day," she said in one breath as she took a seat in the stage.

Halfway up the street that led to the manse the stage driver descended to deliver a parcel, and there stood another boy, a step smaller than the first, but his smile was just as broad as his brother's.

"Hurrah!" he shouted in a voice that could be heard for a block. "Mother has come! Mother has come!" and he threw his cap in the air.

By this time the manse was in sight, and at the gate could be seen the tall figure of the minister. Two children were perched high on the gate post, while in the background hovered old John, the minister's man.

Above the open doorway was a motto made with daisies by clumsy childish fingers, and it read, "Welcome Home." Beneath it stood Nanna, the faithful nurse, with the baby in her arms. When the baby caught sight of who was coming, she began to laugh and coo and hold out her tiny hands to her mother.

"There's a little baby calf," called one.

"The red hen has six yellow chickies," called a second.

"I fell out of a tree, I did," cried a third, "and I hurted myself."

Our mother clambered down from the stage, assisted by our father, and turned to say good-by to her fellow passenger.

"Good-by," said the stranger. "I don't believe you are to be pitied, after all."

"I am the very richest woman in all the world," came the prompt rejoinder from our mother, who had entirely forgotten that she had not had a new gown in four years.

Chapter VII

THE DAY WE CELEBRATE

GREAT BRITAIN keeps her sovereign's birthday with all due pomp and ceremony; America celebrates her own birthday with the boom of cannon, the ringing of church bells, and the setting off of millions of firecrackers, but to the minister's family all such anniversaries sink into insignificance in comparison with Decoration Day, for on the thirty-first of May, fifty years ago, Margaret Sullivan from County Cork, Ireland, entered our service.

"There I sat in that intelligence office," Margaret rehearses the scene every year, looking back into the past with those dim old eyes, "not knowing what would be coming to me, and your father and mother walks into the place; she was that pretty and young I thought she must be his daughter. I

decided right away I'd go to them and I have never been sorry."

Upon what a slight thread our destiny hangs! When one tries to picture the consequence had the young couple walked into some other office on that bright May morning, thus missing Margaret, that incomparable jewel, one holds one's breath and closes one's eyes and says one's prayers, for no one could imagine the minister's family existing for all these years without Margaret.

"Will there be a church near you?" was Margaret's only inquiry, and to this day it requires not only absolution from the priest, but from all the saints in paradise as well, to keep Margaret away from church. Satisfied on that point, she heard without faltering that our village was far out in the country, seven miles from a railway station. Though she hailed from the Emerald Isle, I am sure that she was a true descendant of Abraham, for she showed the blind faith of the born pioneer.

Margaret was forthwith engaged as cook,

but it would have been hampering such talent as hers to have kept her for fifty years in one position, so she became in turn cook, waitress, nurse, general houseworker, errand boy, and, in an emergency one winter, she even unharnessed the horse. She could do odd bits of carpentry when a nail was needed here or there and tie up a parcel so that a prestidigitator himself could not have undone it; she could also repeat with expression the very moral but medically unsound poem,

"'Twas God who made the little fly,
And if you pinch him, he will die,
My mother kind has often said,
'We must not hurt what God has made,
For God is very kind and good,
And giveth little flies their food
And loves each gentle little child,
Who is kind-hearted, good, and mild.'"

These were not all of Margaret's accomplishments, for she could take parties hunting for mushrooms and tell them at a glance from toadstools; in our parents' absence she took the place of father and mother both,

her position being on such occasions little different from that of the pope at Rome; and in later years as she became established as a family institution she acted as escort, chaperon, and watchdog combined. The only way really to describe her is to quote the words of the apostle of old, for she was indeed "all things to all men."

One might have thought that Margaret's loyalty would waver as the family increased; taking care of the minister and his wife alone, as she did the first winter, was a very different proposition from doing for the minister, his wife, and six children, as she had to do in later years; but each new baby was given a cordial welcome to Margaret's motherly heart and no one ever heard her complain or ask to leave the service because there were too many children and she wanted an easy place.

It is hard to say how Margaret looked in the early days; to her "children," as she still calls these grown-up men and women, she has scarcely changed at all, although in

the last few years her sturdy steps have grown more feeble and her quick sight is failing; but her round, motherly face, with its ruddy cheeks, wears the same good-natured, wholesome expression, and there is still a twinkle around the corners of her eyes when she tells of our childish pranks. Her figure might be called composite, for although in appearance she is short and rolly, appearances, as we have often been told, are deceitful, and they must be so in Margaret's case, for I have known her to wear a dress of our mother's, whose architecture might be described as Romanesque, or a blouse belonging to one of her daughters, who was pure Gothic and decidedly pointed, with equal felicity.

Margaret's name was too hard for baby tongues to master, so very early in her reign it was changed to Nanna, and Nanna she has been ever since to all the little children of her acquaintance. It was Nanna who first taught the difficult art of putting on shoes and stockings; it was Nanna who braided our hair in many tiny braids

for any festive occasion, and it was only womanish pride that kept us from unbraiding it in the darkness when all the little knobs sticking straight into our heads kept us from going to sleep. I am glad I can never remember taking them out, even if the effect in curls left a good deal to be desired when the braids were triumphantly undone. It is not strange, therefore, that Nanna's face, with our father's and mother's, is one of the earliest of all the faces that we can remember, as hers was the first to greet us on rising and the last we saw on going to bed; and I have never, in all the world, found anyone who could tuck one up so warm on a cold winter's night as our old nurse.

When one considers the number of things now thought essential in the bringing up of children — the tonsils and adenoids that have to be removed, the teeth straightened, and the eyes examined — one wonders how the children of the past generation ever survived when there were no trained nurses to speak

of, and surgery, as it is practiced at present, was unknown. Without Margaret, it seems, the manse children must surely have succumbed for they had a propensity for taking all the diseases that are contagious and a few that are not. In chicken pox we sickened by ones and twos, with the whooping cough we whooped in pairs, but in measles the six came down at once and our mother and Margaret did the nursing between them and still survive to boast about it. When a couple of children fell ill with scarlet fever, our mother went into quarantine with them, Margaret took the baby, and the other children were sent to neighbors, while Margaret and the cook cheerfully exposed themselves to the extra work and the contagion. It is experiences like these that make one think that the front seat in heaven will be reserved for loyal servants.

The law of nature seems to be that every individual has been young once, so the inference is logical that Margaret was quite a young girl when she entered the minister's

family, and yet, incredible as it may seem, she never appeared young, because she was always as steady as a church and as reliable as the Bank of England. If necessity took our parents to the city, they could leave us in her charge for a week at a time, safe in the knowledge that Margaret would mind our health, our morals, and our manners, as carefully as the strictest martinet in the congregation could desire.

"Well, Margaret, have they been good children?" would be one of the first questions asked on our parents' return; and in the interest of truth it is necessary to confess that very often we had not been, although, after the lapse of years, Margaret refuses to admit that we were anything but paragons.

"They will tell you all about it themselves," was Margaret's diplomatic rejoinder, which later in private conversations invariably led to a confession of guilt.

Faithfully, year in and year out, Margaret did her work at the manse, with only an

occasional difference of opinion with her employers to vary the monotony and prove that we are, after all, still human. Margaret, like the minister and his wife, grew into the village life, and their roots all went deep into the soil, until one day like a bolt from the blue the minister was stricken down and the doctors ordered him to leave his home and seek some western climate.

Here was a catastrophe indeed! What was to be done? It was no light thing to move a family of six children into the unknown West; in fact, the voyages of Columbus sank into nothing in comparison. The mere thought of packing the trunks for six children and at the same time caring for an invalid husband was enough to turn any woman's hair gray. Three nights on a sleeping car with only hand luggage and the infinite possibilities of losing things in an upper and lower berth would daunt the bravest. Speculation was rife as to whether Margaret would be willing to forsake our village, to which she had become attached;

her relatives, who had settled there to be near her, and last, but not least, her beloved church.

"I wouldn't be leaving you now," was Margaret's modern version of Ruth's, "Whither thou goest, I will go." From that moment Margaret became a member of the family — mere relatives seemed as nothing in comparison.

That was a momentous journey. It began before it started — to be guilty of a Hibernianism — by one boy's falling out of a tree and breaking his collar bone. He insisted in sleeping in an upper berth and very promptly fell out of it, fortunately with no ill results; the trunk checks were all left peacefully behind on the top of a bureau, and a slight accident occurred as the train drew out of the station. The one story which has survived through the years, however, is that concerning Margaret. At Chicago we had to change cars and as we left the train each one was given some particular bundle or bag to take care of, while to Mar-

garet fell the responsibility of the two youngest children.

"Where's Henery, where's Henery?" she suddenly wailed, as she toiled up the station stairway with numerous bundles tucked under her arms. The whole family instantly started a search for the missing lad.

"Why, you're holding his hand this minute!" exclaimed one, and true enough she had a child firmly clutched in each hand while she was searching for the boy through the crowd. The laugh that followed had a refreshing effect on flagging spirits.

Time is too short to dwell on those years in the West and life is too sad to make others share the sorrow that darkened the household when the minister forever laid down his work. Through it all Margaret stood by her family, putting her strong shoulder to the wheel, helping by her stanch faithfulness to lighten anxieties, and mourning her master with the sincerest of grief. In all the years that followed we have never heard her speak one word of criticism of anything

he did, for, indeed, in her eyes he was perfect.

As her family grew older Margaret was no longer needed as a nurse and she then drifted into the general handy person around the house. Errands that no one else wanted to run, stockings that no one wanted to darn, colds to be nursed or messages to be carried — Margaret did them all. We did not even have a telephone, for when Margaret was at her zenith she filled that want so exactly.

"You don't even need to breathe when you go to visit the W——s," one of our friends is reported to have said. "Margaret will do that for you."

She would have made a wonderful dispatch bearer in the war, for in doing her duty and carrying out our instructions Margaret permitted no physical disability to hamper her, and I have no doubt that if she could have saved our lives by lying down and having wild horses driven over her. she would have done it.

Her indifference to her own physical com-

fort was at times most disconcerting. On one memorable occasion, she fell down the front steps the day before the family was leaving home for the summer. We picked her up while she was insisting firmly and indignantly that she was not hurt and we foolishly believed her. As she was to accompany us, she was sent beforehand to the city to secure the tickets and check the trunks; she sallied forth in the morning carrying her suitcase, apparently perfectly well, and met us at the railroad station, her work satisfactorily performed. The journey was long, and when we reached its end, we noticed that Margaret seemed very stiff and tired.

"What's the matter, Margaret; are you not well?" we inquired.

"I hurt my side and thumb a little that time I fell," she replied.

The next day, as she was suffering a great deal, we sent for the doctor and found to our horror that her thumb was out of joint and that a rib had been broken in her fall. Other

instances of her fortitude must be passed over with a bare mention of the fact that one day she caught her head in the dumb-waiter of our apartment, having carelessly left it inside the waiter, after having called to the man below that it was empty (the waiter, not the head) and he could pull it down; the result may be imagined. I fully realize that to anyone who has not known Margaret in the flesh these anecdotes must seem very fanciful, but could they have seen Margaret's battered and bruised face the day after the accident they would have doubted nothing.

All of Margaret's characteristics were varied and original. Who in the world but Margaret would think of filling a hot-water bag and bringing it to her mistress when she wished to show repentance for a hasty bit of temper? If, however, there had been a slight family jar and we returned to the house to find our mother sitting at her desk with a hot-water bag in her lap, we knew that Margaret was sorry; if she had another

at her back, we knew that Margaret was very sorry, and if a third rested on the floor by our mother's feet, we knew that the reconciliation had been complete.

In the latter years of her life Margaret was not only errand boy. When her young mistresses went out in the evenings to any social gatherings, she escorted them home; and we often returned from a walk to find Margaret standing in the drawing room, entertaining friends who had dropped in in our absence.

"It is too bad to have missed so much of your call," we would exclaim.

"Oh, that's all right, Margaret has been talking to us," and, judging from their looks, the conversation had been amusing.

When Margaret's flock scattered and took unto themselves a wife or a husband, Margaret lost none of her interest in them but gathered to her heart the grandchildren as they came; and she soon found the old cradle and had it ready for use when the parents visited their mother's home. If any

of the little ones was ailing Margaret was as tireless as ever in their service.

Sometimes a friendly argument would take place between our mother and Margaret as to which generation was the better behaved.

"These children are better than mine ever were," the doting grandmother has been heard to say.

"They are all good children," Margaret would reply, "but there never were better children than their parents. Don't you remember how Mrs. T—— said once at Egremont, 'You ought to see the W—— children; they take the cake'?" And Margaret would be launched on a half hour of reminiscences of bygone years. They chiefly consisted of remarks about our childish perfections which would make us secretly smile as we remembered certain incidents of our youth when Margaret's attitude had been anything but complimentary.

At length Margaret became too old for regular service, though she would never acknowledge that she was too feeble to do

some little errand for us, so it seemed wise to pension her off. A place was found for her in the home of the Sisters of Mercy, and there could not have been a better choice for this devoted daughter of her Church, for the kindness with which she has been treated is beyond praise. Imagine her joy at living in a house where there was a real chapel with altar and candles, with every saint's day remembered and all the fast days as well.

Once she has had to leave this friendly place to go to a hospital some few miles distant from us; this was also run by Sisters so that Margaret felt perfectly safe in every particular. While she was there an incident occurred which amusingly illustrates her relation to the family. On a certain Sunday afternoon, our youngest brother, who is a very busy man, asked my mother if he could take her in the car to see Margaret at the hospital. He is six feet tall, with the kind of face and beaming smile which instantly win him friends; he is no dandy, but a glance should be sufficient to tell an observer where

The Church on the Hilltop

he belongs. A Sister conducted them to the semiprivate ward where Margaret was; as they drew near, Margaret looked up from where she was seated and saw them approaching.

"O my boy, my boy!" she exclaimed in an ecstasy, throwing her arms around the neck of the tall man as he stooped to kiss her.

"Why, is he your son?" the Sister asked in great astonishment, much to the amusement of our mother, who stood watching the meeting.

The greatest event in Margaret's history happened last May when the family celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of her coming to live with us. By some strange and happy accident her children who had been scattered in Europe and Asia were gathered together in America for the first time in twenty years. At four o'clock of that matchless afternoon we assembled in the garden to do Margaret honor. The tall Darwin tulips in soft mauves and pinks, and the purple and yellow irises under the rose arch were brighter and gayer

than any flags woven by the manufacturer, while a rug was spread and chairs placed under the apple tree to give the scene a homelike touch.

Margaret arrived early, clad in her best, her countenance wreathed in a smile, and she was immediately given the seat of honor in an armchair. When the children came, games were started on the lawn, games that we had always played at our birthday parties in our youthful days: "Oats, peas, beans, and barley grows," and "this is the way we wash the clothes, so early on Monday morning," we sang with great expression, much to the amusement, no doubt, of our neighbors.

After all were tired, we withdrew to the chairs and then speeches were in order, while we ate our ice cream and cut the birthday cake. The clergyman of eighty years, in a few graceful words, dwelt on Margaret's long and faithful service; one of her "boys" averred that the congregation never realized how much they owed to Margaret for keeping the children in order when the minister was

away and how without her watchful eye we might easily have disgraced them all; while the six-foot business man read Stevenson's tribute to his old nurse, which so exactly described Margaret, ending with the lines:

> "And grant it, Heaven, that all who read
> May find as dear a nurse at need,
> And every child who lists my rhyme,
> In the bright, fireside, nursery clime,
> May hear it in as kind a voice
> As made my childish days rejoice!"

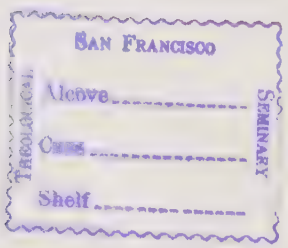
Then a jingle was read which told many events of our childhood and thanked Margaret for all her acts of devotion and at the end a gilt cross, fashioned by the loving hands of one of the granddaughters, was pinned on her breast; on the cross were printed the three letters, D. S. O., and I feel quite certain that no soldier in France deserved it more. Throughout this little ceremony Margaret sat with a smile of happiness on her lips while the tears were running unheeded down her face. At the close we all formed a circle and joining hands we sang

together, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot," and I venture to say that it was never sung with greater feeling.

"Margaret, did you have a good time?" she was asked the next day.

"Have a good time?" came in a broken voice over the telephone, "I was so happy I could not sleep all night for thinking of it."

It has become the habit among certain people to speak and act as if the position of servant were degrading. Whoever knew old Margaret and what her life has stood for could never consider it in that light. If all the maids were like Margaret and all the mistresses were like our mother, there would be no servant problem in America to-day.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Chapter VIII

A HILLTOP IDYL

Sundays observe; think when the bells do chime,
'Tis angels' music.

— George Herbert

IN ALL the world there was no place better suited for tired nerves than our village. The very look of the church spire as it pointed calmly skyward seemed to assure one that under its shadow quietness and peace held sway and that here at least there would be no mad rush of conflicting engagements. If this was true of week days, what pen can do justice to the tranquillity of its Sunday mornings? Even the crow of the cock seemed to lose its blatant, assertive note and become less of a challenge and more of a friendly call from the farmhouse nestled in the valley; while the robins, evidently aware of what day it was, hopped solemnly over

the lawn and the bright flash of orange in the maple boughs told that the orioles had a nest swung somewhere in the tree tops, swaying silently backward and forward at the touch of the soft May breezes.

At the manse Sunday really began on Saturday night, not in the manner of the Covenanters with the singing of psalms, but, on the contrary, with a romp in which the whole family, led by the minister, participated. The old house lent itself to that most fascinating of all games, "hide and seek," for it boasted three separate stairways and many dark passages and closets. The game was played at dusk and to the younger children the fear of wild beasts lurking under stairways or in back entries gave it an added thrill. Any dignified deacon who called at that hour was in danger of being thumped on the back with a loud "tag," or hit on the head with a knotted towel used in a home-invented game called "deer," for no light was permitted and friend and foe alike were treated in the same unceremonious fashion.

A great deal of extra steam was worked off in these Saturday evening frolics which were ended at bedtime by a piping hot bath that washed away all trace of earthiness and started us fresh and clean on another week. On a chair by each bedside was laid the Sunday raiment — the stiff, turnover collars for the laddies and the gay Roman sashes for the lassies. Oh, how the boys hated the collars and how the girls loved the tying of the sashes! Can it be that these same stiff collars have something to do with the attitude of the average male toward Sunday observance?

On a certain May morning the day began with distinction with rice pancakes and maple sirup for breakfast, while the *sotto voce* murmuring of the golden text by one of the younger boys, whose conscience told him he was not word perfect, kept us from altogether forgetting the solemnity of the day.

"Four cakes are enough, my son," came the voice of the minister, whom we had all supposed to be engrossed in the thoughts of

the coming sermon. "Our motto ought to be temperance in all things."

"Why, father, my tummie doesn't ache yet," was the surprised rejoinder from the little fellow who ran his eating by an entirely different set of principles.

"Come to prayers, come to prayers!" called our elder sister, while our mother lifted the baby down from her high chair.

We were soon all settled each in our own particular chair and our eldest brother seated himself at the piano, turning the leaves of the book to find the Sunday morning hymn.

"Safely through another week,
God has brought us on our way;
Let us now his blessing seek,
Waiting in his courts to-day;
Day of all the week the best,
Emblem of eternal rest."

The old hymn, sung by high childish voices, rang through the low room, out through the open window into the quiet streets, and I have little doubt started many of the village people on their Sunday way.

The family then joined in the recitation of the Commandments old and new, with particular emphasis on the loving of God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves. Then followed the repeating of the golden text, beginning with the next to the youngest.

"Wash me and I shall go out in the snow," he began glibly, but was immediately interrupted by a shout from the rest. A recess was then called while we recovered our gravity and the small boy's lacerated feelings were comforted.

Prayers over, the beauties of the May morning called us out of doors; our pets, too, had to be fed, this breath of ozone greatly contributing to a proper decorum in church. At ten the bell from the white church sounded forth its call through the still air and soon the first carriages began to creak up the hill, loaded with whole families, fathers, mothers, and children; no one was too small to come. How gay the wagons looked filled with bright faces, flowered hats, and ribbons of every hue!

"Hurry up, children, get ready for church!" the voice of Nanna, our faithful nurse, came from the window, and we ran in for a last inspection of face and hair. By this time our village neighbors were winding up the path that passed the manse and the six from the minister's family swelled the procession. What a change of expression a few brief minutes had wrought! Our steps were now as steady and slow, our faces as sober as the strictest Puritan could have desired. Only the twinkle in the eye of our second brother, the pet of all the ladies of the congregation, showed the spirit of mischief suppressed for a moment but ready to burst forth at the slightest excuse.

Many a time and oft we had asked ourselves what cruel fate had placed the minister's pew the second from the front, directly under the parental eye and observed of the whole congregation as well. Every wriggle, every yawn, could be seen, every nudge or poke could be commented upon. Our eldest brother felt the full importance of his position

and led the family up the aisle with the sobriety and dignity of an elder; with such a noble example before us the rest could do no less and followed with the utmost gravity, we little girls wondering if Nanna had tied our sashes so that all the stripes showed to advantage and the boys uncomfortably conscious of how their collars scratched.

When the singing began we forgot these discomforts and sang forth with a will. The service soon became homelike because our own father stood before us and talked to his congregation in the same affectionate, fatherly manner he used to his children so that we became less and less conscious of the eyes fixed upon us and more absorbed in what was being said.

The long church windows stood open and the rustle of the leaves of the old sycamore by the gate, or the drone of a bee that had blundered in its course and had mistaken a flower on a hat for the real thing, was nature's soft accompaniment to the minister's voice. If Sunday rest and calm are desired

I know no better place to find them than in the white church on the hill.

On this May morning we left our mother's side as soon as the benediction, in the name of the God of peace, had been pronounced, and hurried down the hill to the Sunday-school room, pausing a second in our course by Mrs. Malaprop's side, in the hope that she might invite us to supper and give us some of her famous layer cake, or that we might hear one of her linguistic lapses. As we reached her, she turned to her companion and said:

"Yes, the Ladies' Aid was put off again and when it did meet nobody came. I told them they might have known what would happen, because when a meeting is sot and then rejoined it never comes off well."

She was too engrossed with her subject to give us the longed-for invitation, so with a chuckle we slipped past, and, forgetting for a moment the sober gait expected of us, ran the rest of the way to Sunday school, to be brought up with a start at the door by the

sight of the superintendent standing on the steps waiting for late comers.

Sunday school was not an unmixed joy to our eldest sister, for Hortense Elizabeth Eloise Johnson sat beside her. Now Hortense Elizabeth Eloise Johnson owned the most wonderful blue glass necklace with earrings to match; in fact, her whole raiment rivaled Solomon's in glory. True her skin was black and her hair was woolly but that was far outbalanced by the beauty of her costume, and at one time in her career my sister would have seriously considered changing places with her, for my father and mother could never be brought to the point of allowing their daughters to deck themselves in glass beads. How hard-hearted our parents seemed!

On this particular morning Hortense Elizabeth Eloise Johnson, though arrayed in utmost glory, appeared in great distress, and tears rolled down her cheeks and splashed unrebuked on her lesson paper.

"Hortense Elizabeth Eloise Johnson, what

in the world is the matter?" inquired the teacher kindly.

"You told us to learn the verse, 'I laid me down and slept; I awaked for the Lord so stained me.' He didn't stain me, I was born so," sobbed the child.

Some of the little girls tittered, but our sister, moved by the sight of so much grandeur in distress, slipped her pocket handkerchief into Hortense Elizabeth Eloise Johnson's clenched little fist. Never again did she envy Hortense Elizabeth Eloise Johnson!

Sunday dinner was a never-to-be-forgotten event; if faith flagged during the morning service, or faltered in memorizing a particularly long verse, the thought of the dinner that was to be set before us revived our drooping spirits. Fricasseed chicken with toast and rice, jelly made from the quinces in the garden, fresh asparagus cut by old John, sugar buns, the cook's pride and glory, lemon jelly, with a plate of homemade candy — it would take a Washington Irving to describe adequately a dinner like that.

Slowly and thoughtfully we pulled our chairs away from the dinner table, then the younger children clustered around our mother under the shade of the old cherry tree while she showed them pictures and told them Bible stories. David and Goliath, Joseph with his beautiful coat, and Daniel in the lions' den, all lived again to the children while she talked, and they sat spellbound, always calling for more. We older children, meanwhile, withdrew to the apple orchard, each with a favorite book, and were soon lost to everything but the troubles of Luther as depicted in "The Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family" or the persecutions of the martyrs in "The Liberation of Holland," as the case might be. It is sad to confess, but, alas, it is true, that the harder the persecution and the more vivid the description of the sufferings, the more the book was enjoyed.

"Father's going to Brookside this afternoon and it's my turn to go! Hurrah!" the voice of our youngest brother interrupted the

reading. "Come, you who are going, it's almost time to go."

We tumbled from our perches in a second and started on a dogtrot to the house while the ones to stay behind cast envious glances at our backs.

"Don't care, would rather finish my book," murmured one and was soon deep in his story.

Who can adequately paint the beauties of that drive along our country road on a perfect May afternoon? We passed no one, for in those days pleasure driving on Sunday was unknown, and the peace and calm sank into our very souls. The banks at our side were blue with violets and white with windflowers, chipmunks scolded at us from the rail fence, from the fields green with early wheat came the call of the meadow lark, while the song sparrow trilled and sang as though he would burst his little throat.

Up hill and down dale we went, until, nestled by the brook for which the village was named, we found the old red schoolhouse which was our destination. The village

boasted no church, so twice a month the minister preached here to all who cared to attend. It was a rude place enough. The rough desks were carved with the names of scholars, some living and some dead; the iron stove stood in the corner; the only organ was a cabinet. But somehow the spirit of worship was there and as the minister talked, one felt the presence of unseen things.

In this enlightened age we often wonder at the hold Moody and Sankey hymns had on the past generation, but anyone attending that little service would have realized how "What Shall the Harvest Be" and "Bringing in the Sheaves" harmonized completely with the surroundings, for looking out of the window one could see the good red earth the men had been plowing all the week and one suddenly felt that for this particular place these hymns were more appropriate than "The Son of God Goes Forth to War." To hymns and prayers alike the little brook that ran beside the way sang a fitting refrain.

Quietly the congregation dispersed, im-

pressed by the minister's appeal, but even more by his goodness; then we drove back into the sunset. The drive home was always a treat, for daintily wrapped in a napkin was our simple supper of sandwiches and cookies. How delicious they tasted in the open air with the fresh wind blowing our faces and the click, click, of the horse's hoofs beating a tune in our ears! Faithful John stood at the gate to meet us and we tumbled out of the carriage and into the house for the crowning event of the day.

Again this evening no artificial light was permitted and in the lengthening shadows we gathered around the piano. The baby nestled in our mother's arms, softly cooing to herself; the next youngest sat in our father's lap, while the rest sat near. Each in turn chose his favorite hymn, ending, as the darkness finally fell, with

"Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me."

Then in unison we recited the Master's comforting words to his disciples: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Somehow heaven did not seem so very far away on those Sunday evenings in the old manse.

Every daughter of Eve hates to be old-fashioned, the modern woman no less than her more sheltered sister, and yet, I must confess, when others jeer at the Sunday of a past generation, I cannot join in. When the avenue in front of our present home has on it a never-ending stream of honking motors and one cannot find a moment for quiet reflection, the vision of an old country road on a May Sunday rises before my eyes, and I feel the hanging apple blossoms sweep my face as we pass, and I hear the catbird mocking at us from the lilacs.

Chapter IX

OUR MOTHER'S PASSION

She smiled when a Sabbath appear'd.
—Cowper

SOME good people go to church from a sense of duty; others, a little less worthy, perhaps, go from habit; but the elect go because they enjoy it. Our mother belongs to this last class.

It would be an interesting study to determine whether our mother's passion for churchgoing is the result of heredity, environment, training, or an innate love of spiritual things. I am inclined to think that all these influences enter in, for in reading our family tree I find that in the seventeenth century certain of our ancestors were hunted over the hills of Scotland as Covenanters; that, being hard pressed by the followers of Claverhouse, our great-great-great-great-

great-grandparents took refuge in a marsh where the water reached to their necks, while a kindly bush protected their heads from sight.

"I am going to scream," huskily whispered our great-great-great-great-great-grandmother.

"If you do I will choke you," firmly, if not gallantly, replied our great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, and, as it was before the days of woman's suffrage, she instantly held her peace.

The blood of such ancestors — who sacrificed so much for the sake of going to church — coursing through our mother's veins must surely have been one element in developing our mother's character. As for environment and training, her father and his two brothers were all elders in the old Scotch Church; thirteen members of the family had pews in the same church; all attended regularly or were asked the reason why. Lastly, at that period, churchgoing was considered a privilege, not a burden. Modern thought lays

stress on the power of mental suggestion, particularly in the training of children; our grandparents used it, emphasizing it sometimes with the point of a slipper.

I would not perjure myself by affirming that at the early age when our mother was first conducted to church she sat entranced by the "firstly," "secondly," "thirdly," "fourthly," and "finally, my beloved brethren," of the eloquent Scotch theologian in the pulpit. Like the taste for olives, love for church grew with the sampling. Our mother now confesses that her attention often wandered, so, to pass the weary moments, she named the family who sat in front of her Mr. and Mrs. Sippi and Miss Ourri; this game became so real that in after years she learned with surprise that they had some ordinary name, like Smith or Brown, and she was proportionately disappointed.

Brought up in the midst of such surroundings, what was more natural than that she should marry a minister? No mere man could resist the subtle charm of such a lis-

tener, who was wont to say with David, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." For fifteen happy years our mother lived under the shadow of the church on the hilltop, and only illness or the care of a young baby kept her from regular attendance there. In those days churchgoing became a duty, a habit, and a pleasure, so that instinctively she felt for her hatpins at the first peal of the church bell.

When the home in our village was broken up and our mother was forced to go out and meet the world with her fatherless children, one great principle was adhered to in our training: illness was the only excuse that was allowed to keep us from church. No matter where we were — in Europe, Asia, Africa, or the islands of the sea — to church we went, and if any recreant sea captain failed to read the morning service on one Sunday, he did it the next, and did it willingly. I would not for a moment infer that our mother is one of those managing women

who fifteen minutes after they enter a hospital or an ocean liner attempt to show those who are in charge how it should be run. Hers is a timid, retiring nature, but when one of her principles is involved she becomes as bold as a lion and her manner of asking is so pleasing, so convincing, that her desire is quickly accomplished.

Thanks to her habit of churchgoing, our mother has given us a store of recollections that the large majority of travelers never gather. Who that has attended the military service at St. Giles's Cathedral in Edinburgh or heard the evensong at Canterbury in the twilight, when the arches spring upward into the darkness and the organ rolls forth its great chords, or seen a mass held in Notre Dame with its incense and its candles, or wended his way through the meadows blue with forget-me-nots to the little church at Chamonix under the shadow of the snow-crowned monarch, or sought out the primitive church at Athens which looks upward to the Acropolis, can ever forget it? If

these associations are pleasant, what about the more sacred memories in the Holy Land, when on the shores of the Sea of Galilee a little handful of Christians turn their thoughts backward to the first perfect sermon preached to waiting, expectant crowds? What a contrast in India to go down to the Ganges and see the burning ghats, the bathing lepers, the pilgrims drinking beside them, the filthy mire of the Golden Temple, and then to attend the orderly, dignified service held in the English Church; in China, to brush against the ragged, dirty mobs that crowd the narrow street and be ushered into a clean though plain building, where the very expression of the worshipers seems to set them apart from the throng outside; or in Japan, to sit on the hard benches that serve as pews and listen to the roar of the river as it rushes past the statues of the hundred Buddhas, or the music of the bells as they boom forth from the temple court near by, and then hear the voice of the clergyman repeat, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Yes, thanks to our mother, we have many beautiful memories.

All this is true, but it does not prove the point that our mother goes to church because she enjoys it, and not from habit or a sense of duty. I must turn to still another rustic church to do that.

Years ago we were accustomed to spend our summers at an attractive mountain village in New England. We stayed at a farmhouse situated on a gem of a lake surrounded by lovely wooded hills. The village where the tiny church stood lay on the far side of the lake and could be reached most directly by a boat or more circuitously by a pretty road that bordered the water. Our mother held, as always, to the belief that it was right to attend not only church but Sunday school, for she felt that in this way we could encourage the efforts of our country friends, who were having a hard struggle to keep up the services.

On the last Sunday of our stay, one matchless autumn day when the foliage was at its

height and all nature lured one into the open, our brother dutifully asked our mother if he could take her to church in the canoe. She jumped at the chance and, arrayed in her best, walked down to the wharf, where our brother was waiting. No one ever knew exactly how it happened, but as our mother stepped on board the canoe slipped aside and she sat down quickly, not in the canoe, but in the chilly water. Fortunately, it was not deep, and she was able to walk to shore, but in such a state that it was impossible for her to proceed. After seeing that she was safe, our brother, being absolutely sure in his mind that her ardor for church was thoroughly dampened for one day, paddled gayly off in order not to be late. At the church door he explained what had happened, and we filed in, certain in our minds that the incident was closed. But it was not, oh, dear, no! Just before the sermon there was a stir in the back of the church, a well-known step was heard coming up the aisle, and before our astonished eyes

our mother walked into the pew. She had changed her raiment from head to foot and then, late as it was, walked the distance around by the lake. If ever any woman had an excuse for staying home from church, our mother had that day. When she did not avail herself of it, we were finally and forever convinced that she went to church because she liked it.

That day had a fitting climax, as some days do.

"I am going to put a five-dollar bill in the collection," our mother announced to us before Sunday school, "I feel that they are a struggling, worthy people and they need encouragement." Our mother sometimes found it necessary to announce moves like this in advance, for her hilarious offspring, if taken unawares, were apt to nudge each other or cough or otherwise draw undesirable attention to the modest lady's deeds of charity.

All went well; but when the collection was taken up I, for one, could not forbear watching what happened. After the bill had been

placed in as inconspicuous a place as could be found on a very bare plate, the usher proceeded up the aisle, and in each class where he stopped there was a pause and then a stir. When the time arrived for the counting of the offering, I saw the heads of the treasurer, secretary, and superintendent close together in earnest conversation. At length the moment came to announce the amount.

"The collection to-day is five dollars and sixteen cents," proclaimed the superintendent in a ringing voice.

"P-h-e-w-!" came in a long, low whistle of surprise from the entire infant class.

"I think it would be a desirable thing to give a vote of thanks to our city visitors who have helped us so much this summer," he continued.

The vote was taken, all hands going up except, of course, those of the blushing summer visitors.

"The vote is almost unanimous," the worthy superintendent announced.

I do not know what happened after that

or how we got down the aisle or out of the church without disgracing ourselves. It required more self-control than we have used before or since, but when we reached the quiet wood road, free from hearers of our unholy mirth, the forests rang. Throughout the day whenever our laughter had subsided for a few moments all one had to do to bring it on again was to murmur quietly, "The vote was almost unanimous."

In reviewing our mother's passion, what has impressed me most is the fact that it has increased with her years. She might allow her children to remain at home on the plea of ill health, but never herself; and it has required threats, entreaties, and sometimes even tears, to keep her from church when she ought to have been in bed.

One July Sunday, for instance, she dressed early for church, as is her wont, and, looking very sweet in her gray dimity, she sallied forth with her granddaughter as her companion. At the top of the porch steps her foot slipped and she fell headlong, hanging

there head downwards until she was rescued by the frightened household. They helped her up and placed her in a chair, sending a messenger for her son, who is a surgeon, to come at once. He was there almost on the instant, and found her an alarming spectacle. A large bruise was fast closing one eye, the blood streaming down her face from a cut on the nose that had gone through to the bone, and her arm was also cut and bruised almost to the bone. Not a groan did she utter while her wounds were being dressed, but when she pulled herself together she looked anxiously up into her son's face.

"You will let me go to church, will you not?" she pleaded.

"You wouldn't want to go, mother, if you could see yourself," was the reply. When she had looked into a mirror, she didn't.

"Your mother is a good sport," is how our brother-in-law, in his terse British way, summed up the situation.

Yes, she is that, and a great many other things as well. She is the haven of refuge

for all who are in distress; no one ever comes to her for comfort and turns way unsatisfied. I do not want to be pedantic, nor a dry moralist of the ancient order, and yet there is something in me that somehow knows that the strength and encouragement that my mother gives so freely to others she gets herself in the quiet hours spent in church, where she so dearly loves to go; and I am sure that William James himself — if he could be consulted — would concur in this opinion.

Chapter X

PECULIAR PEOPLE

"WHERE, oh, where, are the three blue children," our youngest sister warbled blithely as she pulled off her stockings one piping hot day in August, a day so breathless that only locusts and children had energy left to make a noise.

"It isn't three blue; it's Hebrew, silly," retorted our eldest sister scornfully. "But you'll be three blue children after you've run around the yard for a few minutes; if you're wise you'll keep to the grass."

Once a year, after weeks of pleading, we children of the manse were allowed to run barefooted. It was before the days of Father Kniepp, and faddists had not yet discovered the beneficial currents that come from contact with mother earth, so our parents considered it a rather degenerate taste. The

pleasure was of course chiefly in anticipation, as my elder sister knew by experience. When we had cut our feet a number of times on the gravel paths, we were glad to return to our shoes, though we were careful to resume them in some dark corner away from the "I-told-you-so" expression of superior elders.

"Was Major Riley a Hebrew?" asked our smallest brother unexpectedly; he had been turning over my sister's hymn in his mind, as was his way, bringing out after a long interval one of his original questions. "Father read in the Bible this morning that God made the Hebrews a peculiar people, and I heard mother say the other day that Major Riley was a very peculiar man."

"She did not say peculiar; she said queer," amended our literal elder sister. "Everyone knows that that is an entirely different thing."

Just about this time, growing weary of the discussion and not caring a mite whether poor deceased Major Riley was a Hebrew

or a Zulu, I hastily removed my stockings and shoes and ventured gingerly forth into the back yard. Scorning to profit by our elder sister's advice I chose the broad carriage road that led to the barnyard. The pebbles, which were indeed much sharper than anyone would have imagined, made progress slow and torturous. Suddenly I heard a hostile gobble and, looking up, I saw, running toward me with an unmistakably warlike intent, our turkey gobbler; his eyes were so red and his head was stretched forward in such a menacing manner that he looked to my terror-stricken imagination perfectly huge, larger than the tiger at the zoo, and almost as large as an elephant. With a shriek I turned, and forgetting in my fright to watch my steps, I hit a sharp stone that at ordinary times would have felled me, but fear spurred me on for I felt my foe gaining; just as he reached me old John, the minister's man, appeared around the corner, brandishing a pitchfork, and I reached the haven of the kitchen in safety.

The remainder of the family had been so engrossed with their own affairs that they had not known my predicament, nor did they see me sitting on the kitchen steps carefully examining my injured feet. Greatly to my disappointment there was nothing to show that could call forth sympathy, so completely cured of barefooting for that season I retired to the aforesaid secret corner and resumed my shoes and stockings. It would never do to acknowledge defeat after such a short period of glorious freedom from the burden of conventionality as symbolized by shoes and stockings.

Preferring retirement as I did, the question now arose how to employ my leisure. From the doctor's yard across the street I could hear the shouts of the boys at "prisoner's base," while our youngest sister had solved the problem of walking barefoot by engaging in the delightful pastime of sliding down the roof of the doctor's ice house. She would crawl to the top and as the roof reached to the grass on one side there was no question of pebbles.

Church Street, which our Village calls Hilltop Road

In the meantime, it was growing hotter, far too hot for such strenuous activities. Glancing at the back porch, I saw my doll taking a nap in her baby carriage. I had dressed her carefully that morning and it struck me that I might take her for a little genteel walk that would keep us secluded and yet perhaps afford a little pleasurable excitement.

Slipping into the hall, I took down my hat from the rack and with eyes on every side to see that I was not detected, we took our way around the less frequented side of the house, out the wide open gate, and down the street.

The village seemed utterly deserted except for the shouts of the boys in the distance and the persistent song of the locusts. It made the enterprise seem almost hazardous, for there were rumors that gypsy wagons had been seen in the vicinity. Dwelling on these terrifying thoughts made my voyage of discovery less enjoyable, and from a place where I eschewed the presence of all grown

people, I began to think that their companionship might not be disagreeable. At that moment I passed the hospitable gate of Grandma Dalzell and on a sudden impulse I turned my child's carriage up the broad path that led to her door.

Grandma Dalzell's gate had a way of seeming to beckon one. Half of the Dutch door stood open, showing cool vistas of high ceilings and a winding staircase. My mother when she was out with the baby in the afternoon used often to stop for a call, why should not her daughter do the same? I will not claim that the thought of Dinah's delicious sugar cookies was not a factor in the decision, for most decidedly it was.

I hesitated a minute before knocking, but at length courage came and the knock seemed fairly to echo down the hall, so that had I been alone I should have been minded to run away, but one must always be courageous before one's offspring. Then I heard a step, and out from the shadows came the tall form of Grandma Dalzell. Blinded by the glare,

and because she looked a little too high, the old lady did not at first see her small visitor.

"How do you do, Mrs. Dalzell?" I faltered in my mother's best manner. "I had my baby out for an airing and I decided to drop in to see you for a few minutes."

"Bless my soul!" the good lady exclaimed. "Walk in, walk in, I didn't recognize you at first, but I'm glad to see you."

With a thrill of joy, I saw that she was showing me into the best parlor where the beautiful wax flowers stood in a glass case on the old square piano and the brass andirons in the fireplace sparkled like gold.

"Excuse me a moment," said my hostess, "I must get my knitting; I can talk so much better if I knit."

She went out into the hall and I could hear her open the door into the kitchen and say in her high, old treble:

"Dinah, I have a caller who is very warm and thirsty. Could you bring us some lemonade and a plate of the sugar cookies and doughnuts you made this morning?"

At the sound of these words, I thought with lofty condescension of the boys perspiring on their bases and our sister thinking that sliding down ice-house roofs was a fit pastime for a hot summer day.

"What a pretty new dress you have!" said Grandma Dalzell as she seated herself in her high-backed rocker with her knitting in her hand.

"It isn't really new," I responded with a sigh. "It's a 'hand-me-down' of my sister's, but of course it's made over. We have to use economy and invention in our house. I'm glad you like it," I added, brightening a little at the suggestion. "I never thought about it in that way."

"Have you any grapes at home?" Grandma Dalzell tactfully changed the subject, thinking that she would send back a nice basketful with her young visitor.

"Yes, ma'am, but we haven't any more than we need ourselves. I heard mother say so this morning!" was the surprising rejoinder from the daughter of two open-handed parents.

The conversation up to this time had not been a distinct success, the old lady doing her best not to show her inward mirth and the youthful caller, realizing that she was "getting in wrong," but not being sufficiently proficient in the arts of good society to right herself. Old Dan'l Dodd's grandfather clock ticked in the hall very loud and the humming locusts grew even more vocal for a few minutes, then Grandma Dalzell made a fresh start.

"What is your baby's name?" she asked politely.

"Phœbe Van Dorn," came the quick response. "Old Mrs. Taylor gave her to me and she named her."

"Bless my heart, child! Why, Phœbe Van Dorn was the queerest person in our village," Mrs. Dalzell exclaimed.

"Is queer the same as peculiar, Mrs. Dalzell?" I asked, eagerly realizing that here was a person who would not laugh at questions. "And were Aunt Phœbe Van Dorn and old Major Riley Hebrew children?"

"What in the world do you mean by Hebrew children? Aunt Phœbe Van Dorn and Major Riley were peculiar but they were not Jews."

"Well, father read in prayers this morning that God made the Hebrews a peculiar people, and all the neighbors call Aunt Phœbe and Major Riley peculiar, so I thought they might be Jews."

With never a twinkle, the old lady explained the terms that were so puzzling to a small head, ending in this way, "Sometimes I think when the Lord made men and women different he knew how tiresome it would be if everyone had the same kind of brains — it would be even worse than having everybody look alike — and that is the reason he made so many peculiar people."

"I wish you would tell me all about Aunt Phœbe Van Dorn; everybody smiles when they speak about her," I pleaded, sensing a story and shunning a moral.

"Wait a bit until I count my stitches," Grandma replied, settling herself back in the

rocker, glad to get a listener to her recollections of long ago.

For a few minutes the silence was broken only by Grandma Dalzell's softly counting to herself, "One, two, three, four, five," the steady tick-tock, tick-tock, of the big clock, the song of the locusts, and the drone of the bees over the August lilies that bloomed under the open window.

"Aunt Phœbe Van Dorn," Grandma Dalzell began in exactly the right story-telling voice, "lived two doors below the manse where you live now, and next door to the Academy. I often wondered to myself if she had ever been a little girl. I somehow felt that she must have been born grown up, she was so bent with age. She wore a dirty, rusty black dress and when she went out she had an old black shawl thrown over her head that hid all her features except the beak of a nose. I always thought she was a witch and ran whenever I went past her house for fear she would come out and catch me.

"She lived all alone except for her animals;

her pig and cow were her particular pets and she used to say that they had lots more sense than people. She never let anyone inside her door and all the neighbors were anxious to go in to see what her house was like. After I was married she was taken ill and I went in to nurse her, although she did not thank me much. Such a looking place I never did see; for a so-called Christian woman she lived more like they say people do in heathen lands. She had gay-colored chintz curtains to her bed and I found that she had cut out pieces here and there and mended her stockings with them.

"Well, as I was saying, when I was a little girl I was terribly afraid of her. I think the Academy boys were, too, but that did not prevent them from stealing her apples and throwing pebbles at her chickens; but they kept a safe distance, for if she caught them she punished them roundly."

"Why, what did she do to them?" I asked, quite awe-struck to think that such an ogre had lived in our peaceful village.

"Well, she had a switch of small birch branches hung up in her woodshed which she did not hesitate to use when she got the chance, which was not often. I imagine the stories about her lost nothing in the telling, particularly at Luther Conkling's grocery store. He kept a store where the post office is now; the men would gather around his stove of an evening, sitting on the tops of barrels, counters, and old boxes, and far more gossip came out from that store than was ever started in our Ladies' Aid society, I know that. Luther ought to have known better, too, for he was precentor at prayer meeting and led the music with a tuning fork. One winter shortly after we were married, the cold was so severe that many of the farmers feared that they would lose all their live stock. How well I remember Mr. Dalzell's coming home from the store one night, chuckling to himself as he opened the door. Now my husband was a very quiet man who laughed but seldom; he said I laughed enough for both. Of course, I was anxious

to know what had caused his mirth and so I called to him from the kitchen:

"'Charles, what are you chuckling at?'

"He came into the room with a broad smile on his face and started to speak, but the laughter got the better of him.

"'Aunt Phœbe Van —' he tried, and then began to laugh. It was so contagious that I had to laugh too, although by this time my curiosity made me a little cross; if the joke was as good as that I wanted to share it.

"'Charles,' I said, 'if you do not tell me what it's all about I won't cook you a bite of supper!' I knew that this would bring him to his senses.

"'Aunt Phœbe Van Dorn — ha, ha, ha!' It looked as if he was off again so I shook the saucepan in his face and he continued gasping, 'has solved the problem; Aunt Phœbe Van —'

" 'I know perfectly well what her name is,' I replied shortly. 'What's she up to now?'

"'She's solved the problem of keeping her cow from being frozen, ha, ha! She took her

cow into her own bedroom last night, and they say that she has done it for nights past. Suppose we bring Brindle and Brownie in here?' And looking around the room he went off into another peal of laughter; 'I wouldn't be surprised if she took her pig in to-night, it's bitter cold.'"

I laughed so hard at the thought of Mrs. Dalzell's taking such queer boarders into her neat house that I choked over my lemonade, which black Dinah had served in the midst of our conversation.

When I had recovered my breath enough to speak, I returned eagerly to the subject for it interested me deeply.

"Oh, please tell me some more," I pleaded. "You do tell the very nicest stories."

"Help yourself to another doughnut, child. They are very light and would not hurt a baby." (I had a sneaking suspicion that my mother might think differently but I obediently took my third.)

"Were Aunt Phœbe Van Dorn and Major Riley relatives?" I asked; in the back of my

childish mind I had an idea that all queer people must be related.

"Oh, no," replied Grandma Dalzell. "Aunt Phœbe was many years his senior and they had nothing to do with each other. Major Riley was very fond of the ladies. I don't remember who his first love was, he had so many." Grandma Dalzell had closed her eyes in a way that she had when trying to remember bygone days, a habit which did not at all interfere with her knitting. "I can see him now as he used to dress to go courting. He wore a ruffled shirt bosom, a gay necktie, and jewelry to match; one felt like exclaiming when one met him, 'My dear, you're a beautiful creature!' All day long he would hammer at his forge, and then when evening came he would array himself like Solomon in all his glory and go forth to win the heart of some village maiden. He found them harder to conquer than the most spirited horse and never succeeded in getting any of them. I remember my husband asked him once why he never married. 'The girls

I wanted I couldn't get,' was his gallant reply, 'and the girls I could get the Deil himself would not have.'"

After the words "Deil himself" Grandma Dalzell suddenly opened her eyes and became conscious of the exceeding youthfulness of her auditor and whose daughter she was. To my surprise, she appeared quite confused as if she scarcely knew what to say next; old ladies in our village were very particular about their choice of language.

"That was a very wrong expression for the Major to use, my dear," she hastened to explain. "No gentleman, of course, would have used it. As he grew older he grew very queer so that people avoided him. His love for dress took a strange turn for his tall figure with a blue homespun quilt around his shoulders was often seen on the street. A strange thing happened about his funeral. Only three people went to the service, for he had no friends; they were the doctor's wife, your grandfather, and your father, of course. After it was over each of the three came to me

at different times and said in almost the same words, 'I went to Major Riley's funeral, and as I stood there at his open grave I had to wipe a tear away, it seemed so sad that there was no one in the world to care whether he lived or died.' And yet after all the Major had three of the best people in the village to weep over him."

As Grandma Dalzell told me about the Major's strange funeral I noticed in childish wonder that she drew a cobwebby handkerchief across her eyes.

With a start of surprise I heard Dan'l Dodd's grandfather clock boom out twelve. There was not a drop of lemonade left in the pitcher and the last crumb of the sugar cookies and doughnuts had disappeared from the plate. Realizing that I had strained good manners to the cracking point in lingering so long — we dined at twelve in our village — I gave Grandma Dalzell a hug (I had started to shake hands formally after the manner of my fond parent, but the dear old lady had bent and kissed me so that I could

not forbear the hug), then I collected Phœbe Van Dorn, who was sprawling over a chair in a most reprehensible fashion, tucked her into her carriage, and departed reluctantly, pausing at the gate to wave a farewell to the old lady standing in the doorway. How infinitely better the morning had been than the barefooted adventures I had planned!

On reaching home I was reticent about my experiences, conscious that if five lively children adopted the fashion of calling frequently on Grandma Dalzell, a ban would be set by parental authority.

As the hours of the day passed by, the heat waxed worse and still worse, until even our lively brothers sat around on the porch, panting. We dragged weary steps to bed that night and lay awake for what seemed like hours. In that strange time between waking and sleeping I suddenly found myself walking painfully, barefooted, up the gravel path that led to the church. Halfway to the top I heard the sound of hoofs behind

me and turning saw what I realized by a flash of intuition was Aunt Phœbe Van Dorn's cow. There was no mistaking her attitude and with a muffled scream I ran to the gate of the cemetery, swinging it to just as her horns touched my bare heels.

The first minute of my escape I was too frightened to take in my surroundings, but on looking up, I saw in the moonlight a strange group gathered around what seemed to be an open bier. A frightened curiosity drew me forward and on approaching closer I recognized the figures. There was Aunt Phœbe Van Dorn, dressed in rusty black with an old black shawl over her head and a long hooked nose that cast a shadow even in the moonlight; by a stout rope she held fast a huge pig that every now and then emitted strange, unearthly grunts. Next her stood the Major, his shoulders covered with the patchwork quilt, while his straggling locks seemed veritably to stand on end.

With one of those terrified starts one gives when half asleep I started broad awake to

hear the wind that precedes a thunderstorm shrieking around the house, and to my distorted imagination it seemed to wail, "We are all peculiar people, all, all peculiar people."

So much for Grandma Dalzell's doughnuts!

Chapter XI

AN EVERGREEN WOMAN

Beautiful, rich, golden old age.
— *Translation of a well-known Chinese character.*

WHEN Grandma Grey was young, our village consisted of two long streets that crossed at the post office, which was kept in Luther Conkling's store. Major Riley was in his heyday and had not given up all thought of winning some coy village belle, so that his waistcoats were worth noticing and never failed to call forth comment when he dropped in at Luther's on his way to or from his courting. Bawling Cooper, also, whose voice could be heard a mile away when he lost his temper in discussing the coming election, was almost certain to be found there, seated on a barrel of potatoes, while one of the Thompsons always stayed a moment after receiving his mail to discuss

the crops, and there was usually a sprinkling of Babbitts.

The post office, however, was not the place around which the village life of those days centered; it was the church and the Academy which took the leading part in everything that was going on and that brings us back again to Grandma Grey.

Brought up in what the writers of the Main Street school of fiction like to depict as the restricted and narrow influence of village life, one would scarcely expect to find vaulting ambition in the young people of Grandma Grey's childhood, particularly the girls. To them their parents might have said as they did a generation or two later, "The place for women is in the home." There was evidently plenty to do, when not only the women's garments, but all the men's as well, down to the knitting of socks, were made by hand. And yet eighty years ago, at the age of fifteen, Lydia made up her mind that she wanted an education beyond what the village academy afforded, and that she was going to get it.

"But where's the money coming from?" her family asked, aghast.

"I'm going to earn it!" was the spirited response.

"But how?" — in a tone which implied, "Now we've got you!" "And where are you going to school when you earn it?"

"I've got the position to teach at the red schoolhouse on the mountain," came the proud reply. "And I'm going to Mount Holyoke Seminary."

And so she did! This girl of fifteen fared forth early one morning to conquer the world, with her lunch neatly done up in a napkin, tucked under her arm. At fifteen the world is sometimes easier to conquer than at forty. The lad who slew a giant with a round pebble has illustrated that fact for all the centuries.

When the time arrived for the trip to Mount Holyoke, that was also a great adventure and formidable enough to make stout-hearted seventeen flinch, but even that was undertaken and accomplished by a brave

heart. What the course was at Mount Holyoke at that time I have not been able to ascertain, but I do know, judging from Grandma Grey, that the girls who studied under Mary Lyon came away with two things: a great desire for knowledge and character.

Tradition has it that the decorous Mary Lyon did not altogether approve of what in a man's college is graphically, if not elegantly, described as "skirts on the campus" but which in a young girls' select seminary one would suppose is more dignifiedly designated as "gentlemen on the front lawn." It is reported, one cannot say how truthfully, that the first President of Mount Holyoke sent a message to the President of Amherst that she disapproved of the Amherst students' custom of coming over the mountain to Mount Holyoke. The president of Amherst read the note to his students at chapel one morning and continued, "Hereafter, young gentlemen, I would earnestly advise you to take the river road." From this and

the subsequent history of Lydia, we are happy to realize that even in those formal times the men and maidens managed to surmount obstacles for the pleasure of each other's society.

One fateful day on the campus of Mount Holyoke a classmate of Lydia's introduced her to her *fiancé* and a friend from Princeton, whose name was Grey. The fact that Princeton was situated so near her own village made a point of contact immediately.

"If you graduated from Princeton you must know my cousins, the Babbits," Lydia began eagerly, a shade of homesickness in her voice.

"Why, of course! Will is one of my best friends. I visited him not long ago."

No further introduction was necessary in the case of a bright, attractive young girl and a susceptible, brilliant young man, both away from home; the acquaintance grew apace.

After this Edward Grey made the most of every invitation to our village, dropping in frequently at Lydia's home.

"Shall we go up to the hilltop to see the view?" the young man would ask, as they strolled along the street under the maples in the summer moonlight.

"Oh, yes, let's!" came the response. "If it's not too late."

When they reached the summit of the hill and stood by the fence under the old apple tree, the hills and valleys were bathed in the glorious white light, but only the moon knew whether they saw the glory or not, and as the moon is the lovers' friend it is certain that she will never tell.

We do know, however, that among the invitations that were sent out to Lydia's commencement there was one addressed in a neat hand to Rev. Edward Grey, and shortly afterward, with many other eager swains, he sat in the audience and watched the sweet girl graduates. No, that is scarcely accurate — he watched one sweet girl graduate.

That Lydia's strength of character had not been weakened by Mary Lyon's influence

we gather from subsequent events. It is not very long before we find her arranging for her wedding and announcing to her family, in the same purposeful tones which she had used when she broke the news of her desire for an education, that she was engaged to be married to Edward Grey and that they two were going as missionaries to Turkey.

"We knew that long ago," was the response she got from the female members of her family to, what she considered, the surprising news of her engagement.

"Dear, dear!" came the response from the blind male members, "why, it never entered our heads that that could happen."

"Well, if you think it your duty to go," her mother answered her, "I suppose it's my duty to let you." And thus the matter was settled. Instead, therefore, of endless arguments, their friends united to give them a happy send off. That is how it happened that Lydia's bridesmaids presented her with a patchwork quilt which was almost like an

autograph album. Each block was made by a girl friend of the bride and has the maker's name in indelible ink on the little white square in the center, and in the years to come Grandma Grey's children slept under the quilt and made up romantic stories about the different blocks. The patchwork quilt is still in existence to carry down to other generations the names of those whose busy fingers are now quietly resting in the hilltop cemetery.

One is inclined to wonder how it happened that "the moving finger" wrote such an adventurous life for this slip of a country girl, while many a city maiden, with far greater opportunities for travel and education, was content with the conventional round of social life. It was so, however, and Lydia Grey became one of those pioneers whose influence, with that of her descendants, has helped to change the destiny of the Near East.

We Americans have proved beyond all manner of doubt that nothing can surprise a

son or daughter of "Uncle Sam" and that in an amazingly short time they can be equally at ease in the heart of Africa or on the highest peak of Mount Everest. It was not long, therefore, before a typical American home was functioning within the Turkish Empire, and the Turks, it may be readily assumed, were far more astonished at the fact than were the Americans.

Several years passed and Lydia Grey had become as accustomed to the cry of the muezzin three times a day, as she had been to the morning song of our village robins. Children came to gladden the home and make its influence more potent, and then an epidemic stalked into the city, taking for its victims impartially the best and the worst. Edward Grey fell at its touch, leaving his young family alone in the midst of a hostile community.

It is hard to say when Lydia Grey's greatest work began, but one is inclined to think that it was when she returned quietly to our village and settled down to give her children

the same educational opportunities that she herself had enjoyed. Here the force of her character was fully shown in the results of her training, for when the years of education were ended, a son and a daughter returned to Turkey so well equipped that they were able to take a leading part in the educational and medical work being carried on there. They followed in their father's steps as a matter of course. It was not just their duty that influenced them; their mother had in some way managed to plant in their young minds the conviction that it was the most satisfying and the noblest life a man or a woman could live.

"Letters from Turkey, letters from Turkey!" In those early days, after her children's departure, when that cry ran through the house, everyone automatically put down whatever pursuit he was engaged in and hurried to the study to listen in suspense to the thrilling narratives of privation or persecution and to talk all at once over some exciting experience.

There would be weeks and months of silence while massacres were pending or in progress and no mail arrived, but did Grandma Grey's courage or faith ever flinch or fail? No one has ever known it, if it did. She went quietly forward in the firm conviction that right would conquer, and, as if upheld by this courage and conviction, those in Turkey have never faltered before the most appalling tasks or sacrifices. Their letters have had touches of humor even in the darkest hour and there has never been a word of self-pity or a thought that their course was out of the ordinary.

As the years went by, Grandma Grey became quite frail, but although she could not go outside the walls of her own room, her horizon was not bounded by these four walls; the world came to her, that was all. When more active duties for others were denied, she undertook the slight task of doing the weekly darning for a family of six children and that darning bag as it came in full to

overflowing was an awe-inspiring sight to any but the most valiant.

"When mother calls for her cap and a becoming dressing sack, instead of living on beef tea and the Gospel of John, then I know that she is coming around," her daughter was heard to remark after one of Grandma Grey's brief illnesses. And she was ill, indeed, if she confined herself to the Gospel of John, for no Washington politician follows the daily papers with greater eagerness than did this frail old lady of ninety-four; her interest in life and current events was as keen as it was at thirty and there was not a move made in European capitals about Turkey but that she knew it and had formed her judgment on it that very day.

"During the War I wanted to live to see who won and now I want to live to see how the peace comes out," she declared at the age of ninety-two, when the Versailles Peace Conference was in session.

During the exciting summer when feeling ran high over Harding's nomination as Presi-

dent, Grandma Grey knew none of the doubts that assailed less sanguine souls. She announced that she was going to vote the Republican ticket on account of the Cabinet, which she unhesitatingly named as including Hughes and Hoover, and, strange to say, her choice proved correct and the skeptics wrong. Although she had not been out in weeks, on election morning a car took her to the polls, when she had the opportunity of casting her first vote for a Presidential candidate.

Now that she is in her ninety-fifth year she first reads over the headlines of the morning papers to herself, so that she can recommend to her busy daughter those items that are most worth spending time upon.

Could it be possible that Jerome K. Jerome had Grandma Grey in mind when he said, "There are evergreen men and women in the world — praise be to God! — not many of them but a few."

When one considers such a life, one feels like recommending to teachers and parents

who are agonizing in magazines over the failure of the modern school that they should study some of the supposedly outworn educational methods of another generation. Then, perhaps, we shall have a few more evergreen women.

Chapter XII

EVERYBODY'S UNCLE

BY RIGHTS we should have called him Uncle Robert; but no one ever did, to my recollection, except perhaps our grandfather when he would say, apropos of some excursion or journey, "Your Uncle Robert will accompany you," with a fine burr on the "rs" that no one south of the Tweed could ever hope to imitate. Our mother called him "Mr. Robert" to the servants, to distinguish him from his father with whom he lived; but one of the first words that babies learned to lisp was, "Uncle Yarb," using it until they were old enough to say, "Uncle Rob," which satisfied them for a few years, when they gradually lapsed into "Uncle Bob," with a slight accent on the "Bob," that denoted the degree of familiarity and affection that existed between them. His

nephews and nieces knew by instinct that to call a man, "Uncle Robert," put him right away in a class by himself, far removed from the realm of little people.

"Grandfather and grandmother are coming to make us a visit," our mother would say to us some day in May or June, whereby we knew, no matter how late and cold the season, that summer holidays would shortly be upon us.

"Isn't Uncle Yarb coming, too?" the three-year-old would pipe up, "I yants Uncle Yarb."

"Of course Uncle Rob and Nellie will come, too, they always come with your grandmother and grandfather, you know that," our mother reassures us.

At that age a year is but a day, or a day a year, and though we had been told not to expect our visitors for a week, we rushed out of doors to see that everything was in readiness. In the back of our minds we remembered the French doll and beautiful doll-house our fortunate cousin showed us at

Christmas time, not to mention a real bookcase with row on row of nicely bound books; and we felt that though she was on intimate terms with Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life" and Whittier's poems, she was a trifle short in her knowledge of turtles' eggs, or where was the best place to find robins' nests, and how to pick arbutus without pulling it up by the roots. We wanted to assure ourselves, also, that the little fluffy yellow chickens hatched last week would not start tails before Uncle Rob arrived; inwardly we scorned them and outwardly lost interest when they reached the gawky age, being fully aware that it was an impossibility to show them as a rival to French dolls if that catastrophe had occurred.

Some of us had a lurking suspicion that the downy chickens, or what was even more fascinating, young ducks who were at any moment due to peck their way through their shells, could not appeal to a maiden brought up in the city. Remembrance of our cousin's virtue and indifference to monetary consid-

erations were present to at least the writer's mind.

At Easter the narrator had been one of those chosen to accompany our parents on a visit to our grandparents, and I had slept with my affluent cousin in a room adjoining Uncle Rob's.

"Good-night, children, go right to sleep," he would say with his good-night kiss; "I'll give a penny to the child who goes to sleep first." In the morning, I, the selfish one, would claim the penny, while my cousin felt that it was in bad taste to recall the promise. Unfortunately, I have forgotten how the incident closed but, knowing my generous uncle, I imagine we both received more than one penny. Since wiser and later years have dawned upon me, I have come to recognize that some people are born unselfish, and others have unselfishness forced upon them by watchful parents and painful circumstance. My cousin, it must be admitted, belonged to the former, while I lagged behind in the latter class.

But to return to our inspection of the farmyard. These doubts that had crowded my own mind seemed, by some unspoken contagion, to spread to the others.

"I guess they'll be pretty glad to see gentle Brownie, who gives us all the good milk," said my youngest brother; "those goats I saw up in Harlem are orful small."

"Pooh!" said the oldest boy. "Brownie is all right, of course, but she isn't what I call interesting to look at. I saw them feeding the hippopotamus the last time I was in Central Park and they put whole loaves of bread down her mouth at once. That was a sight."

"Well, anyway, Torwood is a splendid horse and carries us all around the country. They haven't anything like that at the Central Park," replied our smallest brother, who longed for reassurance about home products.

"Yes, Torwood's a good horse, but he isn't unusual; you should see the zebra. He can run faster than any horse going and he's peculiar — all striped, black and white."

"You would look nice driving behind a zebra down to Brookside, wouldn't you?" said our sister. "I prefer Torwood; he wouldn't make every other horse shy."

"Well," replied the little boy, trying not to have all his idols smashed, "they haven't got a bird in your old Central Park to compare with our gobbler or anything funnier to watch than young ducks with a hen mother."

"My dear son," said our eldest brother with great patronage, "did you ever see a peacock spread its tail? And the ducks are nothing compared to a pelican swallowing a fish; you can watch it all the way down its throat. Then there is the boa constrictor, and the monkeys," he continued, now well launched on a flood of reminiscences.

The dear son was by this time too much discouraged to listen, and burst out crying, "What's the use of their coming if the city is so much nicerer?" he wailed.

"My child" — our father stood behind us — "hippopotamuses, zebras, and pelicans are all right in a zoo but if they came to live

here, I fancy we should have to move out. You have forgotten that the real purpose of your grandfather's visit is not to see the animals but to see us."

By the time our guests arrived all our misgivings had disappeared, because we had been so busy preparing a large sign, worked in daisies, that had "Welcome" on it. There were daisy chains around the pictures and flowers in every room. From the kitchen came aromas that made us sniff the air and guess what was cooking, while the more venturesome went boldly to the cook and begged the privilege of licking the ice-cream ladle. Long before time for them to arrive we had outrunners as far as the post office to rush up and tell us the minute the carriage was to be seen at the farther end of the village street. When guests like grandfather and grandmother came, our father went to meet them with the carriage; we couldn't let delicate grandmother be jolted to death in the stage.

"Hurrah, they're coming!" breathlessly

shouted our oldest brother when he came near enough to be heard.

Then all clustered around the front gate, waving handkerchiefs and setting up a feeble cheer when the carriage could be descried in the offing — in our village we let some of our emotions, particularly hospitality, be seen and heard as far as the front gate.

The horse stopped, the old lady and little girl were lifted tenderly down; then we swarmed over our uncle.

"Hello, children, you'll be glad to see me when you know what's in that bag! Be careful how you handle it, John. There are fireworks in it and firecrackers. They may go off, if you are not careful," and Uncle Rob, always fearful of mischievous pranks from the boys, breathed freer when the precious bag was in his room.

"Let us get washed up," he pleaded, "and then Nellie and I will be ready to see the farm. If there isn't a new calf, or little chickens, or something, Nellie will want to go back to the city. Let me see, I had some-

thing in a package here," and he felt nervously every pocket, at last finding it in his capacious overcoat. "Here's a box of Wallace's candy, but wait until after supper."

It was not many minutes before we were all on the way to the garden, a child clinging to each of Uncle Rob's hands, one or two in front to conduct the party, while, if memory serves me, a couple more clung to his coat tails.

When "the dear, good man" — his nephews' and nieces' favorite name for him — caught sight of the strawberry bed, his enthusiasm was worth seeing. With a whoop, he made a dart for a luscious red berry, nearly upsetting the little ones clinging to his coat tails, who were not prepared for so sudden a rapture; and when our brother beheld our uncle down on his hands and knees in the strawberry bed, it dawned upon him that perhaps city visitors might find our garden even more attractive than the hippopotamus, the zebra, and the pelican combined. Humanity enjoys seeing animals fed,

to be sure, but it likes even better to be let loose in a fruit garden and told to help itself.

That was an illustrious Fourth, the first and best in my recollection. We were up at the crack of dawn, and though the real celebration could not begin until after breakfast, on grandmother's account, a few quiet(?) torpedoes were set off on the side of the house farthest from her windows.

"Oh, Uncle Rob, my punk has gone out!" cries one small voice.

"I have lost all my caps," says another.

"Uncle Rob, the firecrackers are gone. Have you another box?" pleads yet another.

Thus it continued all day long and Uncle Rob, like a nervous hen with a lot of lively chickens, was busy darting here and there, pulling one child off a piece of punk, where she had firmly seated herself, setting off trains of firecrackers he would not trust to the children, and continually bringing out more treasures from his store.

Dinner brought a lull, but everyone was in fine spirits, and after the arduous work of

the morning, all brought a good appetite to the table. Uncle Rob did more; he brought a fund of jokes, new and old, and we all laughed heartily, and none more whole-heartedly than our uncle. He would put back his head at the right spot with a "Ha, ha, ha!" and everyone else would follow until the ceiling rang.

Of course the fireworks were the event of the evening, and with them the excitement reached its height. Truth to say, Uncle Rob was new at the business himself and rather nervous, so that it was some time before we all got started, and when at last the first successful skyrocket burst upon our entranced gaze, the "Oh's" and "Ah's" were worth hearing.

"Look out, look out! It's going off!" I can hear Uncle Rob's excited voice exclaim, as though that was not what fireworks were intended to do. "That's the finest yet!"

It was an exhausted but an unscratched family — thanks to Uncle Rob — that sank to rest that night and our slumbers were

deep and untouched by thought of hippopotamuses, zebras, or even boa constrictors; instead we dreamed that skyrockets, in all the colors of the rainbow, burst above our heads while we walked through endless stalls of candy and ice-cream booths and heard our uncle's voice saying, "Help yourselves, children; eat all you can; I will stand treat."

After a few weeks our guests left us and we in turn betook of our grandfather's hospitality. In August he invited his children, grandchildren, and many friends — sometimes to the tune of forty guests — to a summer hotel in the Berkshires. Here Uncle Rob was in his element, for there were picnics, straw rides, baseball games, and every imaginable diversion. Uncle Rob was in the midst of everything — his nephews and nieces made sure of that — and everywhere that Uncle Rob went there was a treat going on — either soda water, or peanuts, or candy. If he for a moment disappeared, the chorus of "The man who has plenty of good peanuts and giveth his neighbors none" would bring

him out like a jack-in-the-box, with his hand in his pocket.

The pleasantest sight of all, however, was to see Uncle Rob with the little children. Behind the hotel there was a croquet ground — yes, reader, we still played croquet, which will prove to you that this is a very old-fashioned story — and some apple trees and a lovely green lawn. Under the apple trees were benches and on these benches, every Sunday afternoon, gathered a band of little children. It may seem a trite description, but they really looked like a flower bed in their pretty white frocks, with gay-colored sashes — we wore Roman sashes in that far-off period, with socks or stockings to match.

How the tired mothers must have blessed Uncle Rob on those Sunday afternoons! He would tell us Bible stories, hear our golden text, and, if we knew it, and usually when we did not, present us with lovely cards all gay with bright-colored flowers. We unsophisticated children valued those cards and stored them among our treasures.

After that Uncle Rob read aloud to us some story of which he had a store. We listened with fixed attention to Christian's struggle in the Slough of Despond, walked with him to the wicket, and trembled with him at the lions before the House Beautiful, rejoiced when the heavy load fell from his back, and shivered over his fight with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation; but when he came to the brink of the river and walked up the steep ascent to the Heavenly City, we almost saw, in the colors of the sunset, its white turrets gleaming, and heard the shouts and strains of a celestial anthem that greeted him. And now, to-day, we thank Uncle Rob that he and our parents taught us that death is, after all, a beautiful thing and, to help us in our earthly career, introduced us to one whose English ran as smoothly as poetry to our ears, and whose every sentence had the cadence of music in it.

When we grew tired and restless, Uncle Rob dismissed us, giving us an opportunity

to run around a little and stretch our wearied limbs before we were called to an evening hymn-singing. Now, if you think that hymn-singing was dreary, you are very much mistaken, for there were a number of good voices, with a guitar, a violin, and other instruments to accompany them, and the guests of the hotel used to like to be invited to our private parlor to listen or join in, as the case might be.

Before it was over, the smallest ones were off to bed and fell asleep to the sound of "I will sing you a song of that beautiful land"; or if they heard Uncle Rob kissing his own motherless girl good-night, they would claim their share of a hug or kiss. This is what our mother now sometimes refers to, when she thinks that we do not appreciate the kind of bringing up we had, as "your hapless childhood."

A day finally arrived when the manse children were forced to leave their happy country home and take up their residence with their grandfather in New York. It was a great

change to the fatherless children, but here Uncle Rob came out strong and did his best to take the place of the father whom they had lost.

He seemed to realize that the children would miss the freedom of the country, and every holiday he planned some diversion for them. In the winter, when it was too cold for the outdoor pleasures, we would be taken to the Natural History Museum, or the Metropolitan, and introduced with due ceremony to mastodons, prehistoric animals, mummies of Egyptian kings, sacred bulls, and all the great modern and ancient masters.

The younger ones all privately preferred the mummies. There was something gruesome and uncanny in those royalties, so carefully wrapped and so resembling dried apples, that appealed to our imagination, and made us long to see Egypt and the pyramids. Perhaps our early and intimate acquaintance with Joseph and his brethren had something to do with this morbid preference. We felt that being dried and

preserved was a just punishment to the selfish brethren.

In the spring we would be taken farther afield by our patient and long-suffering uncle. Trips down the bay and up the Hudson, through the parks when dogwood was in bloom, or to the woods of Inwood, where in those days we were able to fill our hands with wild flowers and fancy ourselves back in our old loved village haunts. I hate to think how dreary city life would have been without our Uncle Rob.

Later, we moved to the country and a richer, freer life began for everybody, including Uncle "Bob," for he had been gradually promoted to the dignity of that name. He resigned from business to give his time to deeds of charity and I venture that in all the town there was no busier or happier man than Uncle Rob, with his Sunday-school class, his mission evening, his treasurerships, and his hand constantly in his pocket to give to some one in need.

His charities will have to be left to others

to describe, they were too many even to pause over, because sandwiched in between them all was his life with the young people. The students in college brought home their friends, the girls in school their classmates, and the house was the liveliest in town, while as for Uncle Rob, his star was at his zenith. Before we realized what was happening, the boys and girls who visited us were calling him Uncle Rob and even Uncle Bob; it was too contagious, they simply could not resist it.

There were trips abroad, too, with his daughter and nephews and nieces, and we still wonder what impression this lively crowd from America made on the older civilization. At the time we were, perhaps, too happily indifferent to anything but the pleasure we were having. Generous Uncle Rob was particularly concerned about the tipping. He felt that it was the wrong principle, and reiterated it many times, though I am free to confess that in the end he became an adept in the art, doing it most generously,

and I think the beneficiaries liked the friendly word that came with the shilling as much as they liked the fee.

"Come here, Uncle Bob, we have something interesting to show you," his nephews told him one morning in old Grey Friars churchyard. We had all been reverently gathered around the flat gravestone where the Covenanters had signed the covenant with their own lifeblood. Uncle Rob had been much impressed, as we all were. We were startled and surprised, therefore, when we heard his loud "Ha, ha!" behind us. We turned to see the cause of this unholy mirth and found him in front of the martyrs' monument reading the inscription which began in this highly appropriate manner, appropriate at least to tourists:

"Halt, passenger, take heed what you do fee," (the old-fashioned S making it read in this manner). This inscription tickled our uncle's fancy so much that he quoted it with glee until the day of his death.

These good times could not last forever, however. The young people gradually separated, going to many different countries to take up their life work, but one of the strong bonds that kept them together was Uncle Rob's interest in them. Subscriptions to magazines and checks for their work would come at Christmas and other intervals, and letters not infrequently. If he came on a visit, he would always bring a box of candy and when he left there would come by mail a present for the great-nephews and nieces.

When he was a man of seventy-six, he was just as young at heart as he had ever been and his grandchildren looked upon him as their playfellow.

"Come, grandfather, let's have a game of marbles," his seven-year-old grandson pleaded the first evening of my last visit. And before I knew it, the two of them were on their knees in the hall, their heads over the marbles. The next day they were out in the garden, trying to fly a kite, and Uncle Rob's voice was just as excited and just as

young as it had been when he was setting off fireworks years before.

"He was a good man," said old Margaret, with the tears running down her face, on the day she heard of his death. "Many's the dollar I've had from him." The cook was too choked for speech and as for the grandsons, they took it quietly, but when their mother was alone with them they could scarcely be comforted. It is not every man that servants and children weep for.

Our hearts are sad that this loved comrade of our youth has left us; the earth is lonelier to-day without his cheerful spirit to bear us company. The afternoon after his death we drove some thirty miles to his home. The way was full of happy memories that were now tinged with sadness, because the last time we had been there he had asked us to be his guests. When we reached the town, it was just light enough to recognize the way, and as we approached his home it seemed to me that I could almost discern his figure in the twilight, trudging on the

road ahead of us, as I had so many times seen him accompany little Joe on a visit to a friend. We missed his cheery voice at the door — he was the most perfect host I ever knew — yes, earth seemed a lonely place that night without our childhood's friend.

It is considered almost a sacrilege to suggest a change in the Book of Common Prayer, but there is one little petition I should like to see added, if it could be done with tender, reverent touch — a prayer that every little child in all this whole wide world of ours might have an Uncle Rob.

Chapter XIII

DOORYARDS

AUTHORITIES differed when they tried to explain wherein the charm of our village lay; they differed as radically and firmly as authorities do about all sorts of subjects, such as the League of Nations, or whether Bacon wrote Shakspere, or whether corporal punishment is necessary for children. Discussions were numerous, therefore, but there were no two opinions as to whether the charm existed.

"It's the view," declared the latest arrival in a determined voice; she had dropped in for a little chat as she returned from the church porch where she had seen wave on wave of hill and valley lying basking in the sunshine.

"It's the fine air," responded a second speaker who made a pilgrimage to our village

from the South every summer. "Who could be unhappy in an atmosphere that is as exhilarating as champagne?"

"One cannot live on air; at least, I cannot," commented a third. "I think it is the genuine friendliness one meets."

The manse children had heard the conversation as it drifted through an open window and soon grew heated in talking it over.

"They did not say a word about the school," protested the student of the family. "It's one of the finest in the state."

"Pooh! you are always thinking about books and studying," returned another. "You can't be in school all the time. I think it's the coasting. Thompson's hill is the longest anywhere around, and just think of the thank-you-ma'ams."

"You can't coast in the summer time," interposed the "tomboy"; "as for me I like the apple orchard best, there are so many perfectly lovely seats in it."

"It's the dooryards," I announced with conviction, looking with pride around the

well-kept lawn and through the open gate of the garden. "I am sure it's the dooryards."

"It's Maggie's rusks," piped up the littlest fellow, who was at an age when the joys of the table threw all else in the shade.

"Piggy, piggy, piggy, pig!" came the cruel response, and the discussion was unanimously ended as we children rushed to the kitchen door to see if Maggie had by any possibility been making delectable dainties.

My childish partiality for dooryards still persists, although it takes some courage to choose them for a title. Instinctively my imagination conjures up the aristocratic noses that will elevate themselves when their owners read it, and the slim fingers that will hastily turn these pages to find some more congenial subject such as "The Proper Setting for an Italian Garden," or "The Place for Shrubbery Around the Suburban House."

In our village, nevertheless, at the time of which I write, we spoke of dooryards, back and front, without a blush; we raked leaves and picked currant worms where all the

world could see, with no apology about "needing exercise," for that would not have held water; in a place where there was always housework to be done, or butter to be made, exercise was the last thing needed or desired.

To make this confession complete and be able to hasten to more congenial matters, truth forces me to admit that we not only had dooryards, but picket fences and board walks as well, and though I may defend dooryards with my latest breath, I here and now do solemnly declare that I hold no brief for board walks or picket fences, although, in the dim vistas of memory, I can recall a time when a piece of wood drawn quickly over the pickets made the sweetest music in the world — that is, when it was yourself who drew it.

Comparisons are "odorous," particularly as they regard gardens, and in a village so rich in dooryards — and picket fences — as ours, it would be hard to say which of our neighbors' was the prettiest. At every house

there was a rosebush by the gate, or a lilac bush to scent the air and tempt mischievous catbirds in May; but, next to our own, none was so dear to my heart as the village dressmaker's, for the path that led to the little white house with green blinds was lined with flowers; bleeding hearts, pansies, mignonette, and heartsease all put up their tiny faces as though pleading to be picked, and the beauty of it was that their mistress never let us leave her without a posy, or a sugar cooky, or both. We never refused to go on errands to the dressmaker's! But there, if I describe all our village dooryards there will be no words to tell about the manse garden, and that, as any villager would magnanimously declare, was the queen of them all.

The manse dooryard set the village fashions in flowers, just as truly as Paris sets the fashion in gowns for the rest of the world. There were several reasons for this, but the chief reason of all was that the minister and Old John, the man of all work, loved growing things and they were the magicians at whose

touch vines, trees, shrubs, and plants throve and beautified the earth.

"Turn to your left at the post office and go straight up the street until you come to the last house at the foot of the hill by the church. You'll know it by the sycamore in the dooryard and by the garden. You can't miss it if you look for the garden," were the directions usually given to the stranger wishing to find the manse. "There will be an old workman pottering around the place and ten to one you'll see the minister, too; he's a great hand at the garden."

I can close my eyes and see the old manse now, with the sycamore covered by a wisteria vine at the gate, the flower beds under the dining-room windows, the trim turf ornamented by flowering shrubs and cherry trees, the lilac hedge and the hollyhocks that fenced the apple orchard from the lawn, and on the other side of the house the flower and vegetable garden. Under the fir tree sweet English violets grew; along the fence that led to the church were moss-rose bushes and

yellow roses, to tempt the erring city boarder; near the gate a patch of velvet pansies, yellow, deep purple, and violet, breathed the faintest of perfumes into the air. There were peas, beans, asparagus, and quinces, too; there was a grape arbor and, best of all, a strawberry bed, the flavor of whose berries almost rivaled that of their famous English cousins. Oh, that garden was a wonderful place to be let loose in, on any fine summer or autumn day!

The minister had learned a secret from the garden that only a man who loved nature dearly could have found out at all, and that is, that although a pulpit is the best place in the world to preach in on Sunday, a garden is the best place to practice in during the week.

One cannot quarrel with one's next door neighbor if one exchanges roots and seeds over the back fence and sends in a fine bunch of grapes or a particularly nice head of lettuce occasionally. It's impossible! The minister's uncle had an estate in the country

and his gardener, every spring, sent boxes of slips from his greenhouses in fascinating packages with sticks in them to tell the names. The whole village profited by this, for seeds were given or roots divided for the benefit of other dooryards. The gospel as taught by the manse garden became very popular.

People get close to one another, too, in a garden. Some influential citizen would drop in for a moment's chat and find the minister trimming shrubs on the lawn; the conversation would naturally turn to trees and how to take care of them.

"I have been wondering if we should not have a committee in the village to trim our shade trees, they look rather ragged," the minister would suggest, and, before the visitor realized it, the matter would be arranged. After the trees were attended to, the question of untidy sidewalks came next — neatness being the minister's hobby — and so out of a morning's chat in a dooryard a village improvement society would grow.

It was wonderful what a point of contact his garden gave the minister in his afternoon visiting. A man who knew about topsoil and dressing was a man to be respected, and his opinion on many questions accepted without gainsaying. "If he knows so much about plants that are not his business, he must know a great deal more about right living, which is." Thus the farmers reasoned, and they accepted his infrequent rebukes without a murmur, and were stanch supporters of his plans for the betterment of the village.

The best thing that work among flowers teaches one, without one's realizing it, is tact. Think how gently little growing things must be touched, if they are to thrive; delicate roots cannot be bruised or broken. When one saw the minister with children or frail invalids, one recognized the skillful handling of the gardener who never bruised.

"I was going home from school one day," said a little girl who lived a mile or two from our village, "when the minister came up behind me in the buggy and asked me to ride.

He talked to me so gently about studying and developing into a noble, God-fearing woman that I shall never forget it. Nobody ever talked to me in that way before." In this friendly manner a little human plant was started growing upward to God's sun.

The manse garden not only set the fashion in flowers for our village, but its influence also spread beyond into homes scattered throughout the country.

"I hear that Charles Doolittle, or Katharine House, or John Petrie" — as the case might be — "has had a breakdown. Don't you think we had better ask him here for a change? The city isn't a good place for him and there is no air like ours," the minister would say to his wife. And before one knew it the friend would be installed in our guest room whose windows looked right out into the branches of a cherry tree; if he was so fortunate as to be there when it was in blossom, what a treat he would have! The early morning would be sweet with the songs of birds and the dawn would turn the white

blossoms to pink; surely the poet must have been in some place like our guest room when he sang,

> "God's lark at morning I would be
> I'd set my heart within a tree
> Close to his bed and sing to him
> Right merrily
> A sunrise hymn."

And surely, surely, he must have heard in the evening our thrushes' cool, sweet notes when he wrote,

> "At night I'd be God's troubadour!
> Beneath his starry walls I'd pour
> Across the moat such roundelays
> He'd love me sure —
> And maybe praise!"

Morning and evening were not the only happy moments in our guest's day. There were long hours of contentment spent with a book on the back lawn, or short walks past the dooryards of our neighbors, receiving friendly greetings everywhere. There were drives along green meadows and through woodlands, uphill and down dale, with soul-

satisfying views wherever he might turn. The manse garden and farm were not for æsthetic purposes only; the Jersey cow supplied the table with the richest cream and milk, the eggs were gathered by John every morning, the vegetables came straight out of the garden, and there was cheerful conversation and laughter as an appetizer. Was it strange that the guest always recovered and returned to the city to sing the praises of the garden, and of our village generally?

Our houses all had dooryards, but so did the church as well, and the minister took a particular pride that the lawn should be kept not only looking neat but also that it should be a proper setting for the church which crowned the hill.

"I think we should set out a few trees on the church lawn," he announced to his session. "It would greatly improve the approach to the church and the appearance of the whole street." Of course the session unanimously agreed; in matters of taste they always deferred to the minister.

The trees, fine young evergreens, were bought and planted, but the first years of their existence were precarious. Winter's icy storms and summer's drought threatened their existence; even the dumb animals seemed to conspire against them, jealous, perhaps, of the tender grass that they usurped.

"Howly smoke, the baists are ateing the shrubbery agin," Old John would exclaim as he looked over the garden fence, and he would be off, brandishing a rake, while the minister would follow. After several such episodes and when one tree had succumbed, done to death by the force of circumstance, temporary fences were erected to protect the trees, and so the rest survived.

As the years passed the trees grew and flourished, and not only the trees but all the good things which the minister had planted in the village, though he was no longer there to watch the result of his labors; for the winter storms, so unfriendly to the young trees, were harder still on the delicate

strength of an overworked man. One March day he was laid to rest on the hilltop, overlooking the garden and the village he had so lovingly tended. Many years have passed and our village has changed and grown out of all recognition, but the skillful pruning and training of the gardener's hand are still felt. The community spirit for which he strove has prospered and grown strong; a district nurse now guards the health of the countryside; during the War a Red Cross Society did splendid, self-denying work; a year or two ago a community Christmas was celebrated which all who attended will remember.

Do you doubt that a man's influence can be felt thirty years after he is gone? Let me convince you. The tree that was chosen by our village for the Christmas celebration was one of the trees, now grown to maturity, which the minister had planted on the church lawn.

It was a beautiful night; the stars were so bright and jolly that they seemed to be doing

their cheerful best to light the little groups of people who left their dooryards and climbed the hill to where the tree stood and sparkled. The merry voices of happy children welcomed each newcomer and when all were assembled, our village, merged into one large family, sang its carols of praise.

"Silent night! Holy night!
All is dark, save the light
Yonder, where they sweet vigils keep
O'er the Babe who in silent sleep,
Rests in heavenly peace,
Rests in heavenly peace."

rang out from the lawn, over the church, and above the hills, until one felt that it was caught up by the choir invisible and wafted to the stars.

The modern spiritualistic teachings strike me as sordid and unproved; I cannot imagine our dear ones returning to tell us what brand of cigarettes they are using; but somehow I feel that among the crowd of villagers that night an invisible figure moved, and that the

happiest of all the throng was that unseen presence.

And so, in almost the same words that Tiny Tim used at another Christmas party, I say, "God bless our dooryards; God bless them every one!"

Chapter XIV

HIS OWN PEOPLE

But Cristes lore and his apostles twelve
He taught, but first he folwed it himselve.
— Chaucer

VISITORS to our village came for many and various reasons, but they had been there only a short time when they began to realize that the village life as a whole centered not in the air, or in any institution, or in a beautiful landscape, but in a man! The outward attractions had been described to them, but who can give a portrait of the spirit of a man?

"There goes a gentleman!" exclaimed a new arrival, on seeing for the first time the lithe figure of the minister swinging down the street on the way to the post office. She had recognized at a distance his quality.

"I'm going out for a walk," she announced a little later to a companion who had often visited in our midst, "to see the sights and find out if anything ever goes on in this village."

"The minister is the most active thing if you want something going on, but you won't have much rest if you try to keep up with him," was her friend's reply.

As the visitor reached the manse gate, a startling wail rang out on the still air. "Oh, oh, I am killed, I know I am killed!" Down the drive from the barn came a boy and a girl. The girl was very white and big tears rolled down her face, while one arm hung down helpless: her brother was sympathetically supporting her on the other side; in the rear two or three children followed in frightened silence.

"What is the matter?" asked the stranger, hurriedly entering the gate, while she thought to herself, "evidently something does happen in this village once in a while."

"She fell out of the haymow and caught

her arm over the horse's stall," explained the small boy; "I guess it's broken."

"Do you think she'll die?" whispered a frightened voice from the rear. "She says she's killed."

The little group gathered around the stranger while she examined the arm and at that minute old John, the hired man, and Margaret, the nurse, hurried up.

"I think the arm is not broken, but it is probably dislocated. She had better see the doctor. Where does he live?" asked the newcomer, now thoroughly interested.

"Across the street. Father is there now," the boy answered. "The baby is ill and he went to get some medicine."

"Well," said the kindly stranger "we had better go at once." She held the wounded arm so that the walking would hurt as little as possible and the procession moved across the street. They found the father and the doctor together and after explaining her errand as briefly as possible the visitor withdrew to resume her walk.

The view she found very lovely and she lingered for over an hour, unable to tear herself away. On her road down the hill she noticed the father of the children on the porch and stopped to inquire after the little girl.

"Do come in and rest and I will bring you a glass of water; the day is so warm," he invited her, after he had answered her inquiries and assured her that, though the arm was dislocated, it was not broken.

Glad to sit down and rest, the visitor accepted the porch chair which was offered and began to take in her surroundings.

"What a lovely garden you have!" she said at length.

"I am glad you like gardens," the man answered eagerly; "that is one of my hobbies, where I take my exercise. I am sorry that Mrs. W—— is busy just at present; if you can wait a few minutes I should like you to meet her."

While she waited she talked and covertly watched her host. What was a man with a

face like that doing in this out-of-the-way village? It was not only the refinement but a certain spiritual quality that made the casual passer-by stop and look and wonder. Ah, this was the man whom she had seen swinging down to the post office, whom her friend had said was the minister. It was the church which kept him in the village. But still she wondered.

Fascinated, the visitor prolonged her call until the minister's wife arrived. Here was another surprise for she was evidently city-bred, and yet she maintained she loved the country.

"But does anything ever go on here?" the visitor asked in bewilderment. "I know a dislocated arm can't happen every day."

"Well, in this particular house something goes on all the time. Six children are never quiet," laughed the mother of the lively six. "And if you watch my husband you will see that he is not idle long."

Realizing that in her interest she had stayed an unconscionable time for a morning

call, the visitor made her adieu. As she left, she said to herself, "I have made two friends to-day."

As the weeks passed the visitor became more and more conscious of the busy life the minister led; there was nothing that touched the good of the people, from the village improvement society, whose first by-law ran, "A fine shall be imposed on any member who says, 'Nothing can be done in our village,'" to the library and the community chorus — known in those days as the singing school — in which the minister did not have a guiding hand, if he was not the originator. It was he who was the life of the picnics and socials or anything the young people started, and, last but not least, it was the minister who put his hands way down deep in his pockets and paid for all these things, winning the reputation among our neighbors of being a rich man, until they found out that his motto in life was "Give until you feel it."

How did he do it? By putting a fresh

band on his hat instead of getting a new hat; by the minister's wife doing without the silk gown she would have liked; and by the children's wearing "hand-me-downs." Oh, there are a thousand ways that can make money to give away if only one uses a little invention!

The minister's activities were not kept within the limits of his parish. The visitor soon found that he was a force in his denomination. The more she learned, the more she wondered that he had so much time to cultivate friendship, until she mixed with our neighbors.

For the whole village adored the minister — I do not speak in hyperboles. Even the sinner who had been rebuked by him loved him, for the sinner could tell by the minister's manner that his sin really hurt his friend; besides, the sinner knew that if he were in need the minister would take the coat off his back and give it to him. You couldn't bear a grudge against a man who took as much interest in you as that — at

least our village sinners couldn't and didn't. Instead, they always waited until the worst storm of the winter to get ill or die and confidently sent for the minister to come through the most impassable drifts to visit them, which he, also, always did.

The way the sinners loved him was not a circumstance to what the saints felt, those who filed so decorously into church of a Sunday morning, after having waited until the last possible moment in the vestibule to get a "Good morning" or a handshake as the minister entered. These saints listened with a rapt attention even to the notices, but not so breathlessly but that they could keep an eye on the children in the manse pew. On week days they watched his coming and going in the depot wagon, hoping against hope that it would be their turn for a visit and keeping the best parlor well aired in the prospect.

Yea, verily, the saints loved him as a matter of course, but if you wanted to know how a man could be loved, you should go to

some home where sorrow had entered. In illness or death, the minister was the first person after the doctor to get there, and sometimes the former would come first and send for his friend the doctor, for the doctor showed in his profession the same devotion to duty that the minister did in his.

In fact, after the minister, there was no man in our village so respected as Dr. John, though the doctor did not always realize this because we stood a little in awe of him.

When our neighbors awoke in the middle of a cold, rainy night and heard the sounds of buggy wheels, they would say to themselves as they turned over in their warm beds, "There goes Dr. John," and a few minutes later more wheels would tell them the minister also was abroad, and then they knew the matter was serious, and inquired at the post office next day to find out who was dying.

In visiting the sick the minister did not confine himself to ministerial exhortations. A good many people living in outlying dis-

tricts had little idea of ventilation and sanitation and he would show them how to air the room. "Let me fix your pillows," he would say after greeting the patient, "and we'll pull down the shade to keep the sun out of your eyes." With skillful touch he would make everything comfortable and from that day the grateful invalid would listen for the sound of his cheery voice as he stood at the door. It was not strange that those who were ill or in trouble thought that the sun rose and set in their minister!

But the love that the minister received outside of the manse walls was faint compared to the way the servants and children worshiped him. There was Margaret, the nurse, who, when the minister and his family were banished to the West on account of his health, refused to desert them, who ran up and down stairs a thousand times a day for her master; and Maggie, the cook, who would leave washing, ironing, or bread-making to cook some delicacy the sick man had mentioned; and, last but not least, there

was old John, to whom the readers of this story have been often introduced, so that they can shut their eyes and see him standing at the gateway with a lantern.

"John worships his master the way he does the Virgin Mary," John's wife would say. "And sometimes I wonder if John does not think that he deserves a higher place in heaven than the blessed Virgin herself."

But to see the minister at his best, one must have been with him among his children. To watch him toss the baby, and see the little thing laugh and gurgle into his face, and hear the other children calling, "My turn next," or beg for one of his stories, or coax him to have a game of "I spy," or sing them a song; or to hear how tenderly he talked about their wrongdoing, and kissed the penitent sinner, or how the thought of his desires kept ringing in their ears throughout young manhood and womanhood — no pen of mine can give any idea of a father like that!

There were many anniversaries, and holi-

Union School House

days celebrated at the manse, but in April came a day that was unique. This day has already been referred to in these friendly chronicles, but its character was so unusual that it merits more than a passing word. The girls from the crossroads gave the signal for its arrival when they brought a few dainty sprigs of arbutus into school. At the sight our excitement could scarcely be suppressed, and when we were dismissed we would rush straight home.

"It's here!" our eldest sister would call, as soon as she came within shouting distance of the front hall.

"Hush, you'll wake the baby. What's here?"

"The arbutus down at Union Schoolhouse! But we will have to go quickly or it will be all gone. The blossoms are very far out."

The next afternoon the family would all be collected in the village stage, for, as the old song has it, the family depot wagon "could not carry all." There were always two or three friends, with an extra child or two

borrowed from somewhere, and, of course, Margaret and the baby. What a time there was getting us all seated, and, last but not least, we all had to wait while a search was made for our very youngest brother, who never stayed in one place for many minutes together and who would be found feeding his rabbits or hunting eggs while he waited for the cry of "All aboard."

What a ride that was, when the ends of the willows had just been touched with green by the tip of nature's paintbrush, and the bushes by the river were showing pink and the young life in the stage was so full of enthusiasm that it could scarcely be held down.

"Look, look, look! There's a whole field of young turkeys. One, two, three, four, five, six! Now I'm ahead; I've forty-five animals," called the smallest boy from one side of the stage.

"Pooh, I've just seen ten sheep and they count five apiece!" called his rival from the other side.

"Now, we are out of the village, father, do sing about the ram," pleaded our little sister. "Yes, do, do, and the waiter who bawled it through the hall that he didn't serve bread with one fish ball."

So our father raised his ministerial voice in the pathetic song of the ram of Darby.

"The little ram of Darby,
The little ram, I say,
He was the fattest ram, sir,
That ever fed on hay.

"The horn onto that ram, sir,
Did reach unto the moon,
A man went up in January,
And never came down till June."

With such pastimes the way did not seem long, but what interested the visitors most was the manner in which the minister greeted every person we passed on the road.

"Whoa!" the drivers of the passing farm wagons would say and their sunburned faces would brighten at his cheery words and they would want to linger so long that there seemed danger that the ravine would not be reached before sunset.

Nevertheless, our destination came in sight at last and we all literally tumbled out in our eagerness.

"Be careful not to drag the flowers up by the roots," we were again cautioned. "Take only the blossoms."

But there were some strange children wistfully watching the merry crowd and the minister could not go without a word to them, so he pulled out some picture cards which he carried for just such a purpose, and gave one with a pleasant word to each boy and girl; then the incident was apparently closed and a united family was soon engrossed in the hunt.

"Where's Henney?" The usual cry rang out, as with baskets full of fragrant flowers we were seated in the big stage ready for the ride home.

Of course our youngest brother had wandered away once more, and was discovered throwing stones at a bullfrog to see him jump — yes, friends, minister's children occasionally do such things — and was brought

back radiant but in a very moist condition, for his beaming smile usually covered a multitude of mischief forming in his fertile brain.

For days we talked of the pleasure we had had and then it was forgotten by the family. But everyone has not forgotten. Ah, no! A twelvemonth passes and then another and with an invalid father we have been banished to a western city. The snowdrifts have not all melted in that northern climate, when one day the postman leaves a package and a letter addressed to our father.

"I bet it's a Bible," said our youngest brother.

"Nonsense, no Bible was ever so light as that," corrected his superior older sister.

We wait in suspense while under rolls of soft, moist cotton are discovered some delicate, fragrant blossoms of trailing arbutus. The letter is a shy note in a childish hand and read, "We used to notice that you and the children liked to come every year and gather arbutus, and the last time you came

you gave us some pretty cards, so we thought perhaps you would be glad to have some of the flowers this year, because they may not grow where you are." No one but the minister's wife can tell us how many homesick tears watered those precious blossoms.

It was in this manner that the minister went about our country roads and byways, talking to everybody, making friends everywhere, until they said of him that there was not a man or woman in the township to whom he had not spoken about his or her soul's welfare. What is more, no one ever resented it, while over and over again people have told how a word from him changed all their outlook on life. A brother clergyman said of him, "I have never known more universal expressions of love and grief spoken of any man than of him."

The winter the minister took a bad cold, no one noticed it very much except his wife; and because he did not spare himself no one but her tried to spare him, so that when the

final breakdown came, a feeling of regret swept the parish and each and all heaped loving attentions on him until the family left for the West.

The Sunday before the minister went away, he insisted on going to the Sunday school and, though he seemed too weak for such an effort, he stepped to the blackboard which stood on the platform and wrote, "I want everyone in this Sunday school to be a Christian before I come back — no, before I go away. Your loving pastor."

The service in church that day was one of pent-up emotion, though all spoke cheerfully of his return; he was not, of course, able to address his people, but he pronounced the benediction and the last words that he uttered in the church were these: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: . . . the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

"I shall never see anything so beautiful, until I see it again," were his words of farewell to our view from the hilltop.

The next two years were spent in fighting his disease, but during it all he was never too ill to speak a word of cheer to others until everyone marveled at his pluck. A few verses written at that time gave the keynote to his life:

"I am often very weary,
And both flesh and spirit fail;
The way seems sometimes dreary,
And with joy the end I'll hail.
But let me serve!

"The idlers are so many;
The workers are so few —
In some fields are not any
Who yet can dare or do;
Oh, let me serve!

"What offering can I tender
For what Thou gavest me?
What service can I render
That's worthy, Lord, of thee?
But let me serve!

"And when thy hand has raised me
Unto thy heavenly throne
I'll say when I have praised thee
For the 'Well done' and crown,
'Still let me serve!'"

After they had laid him to rest as near as possible to the church he loved, the kindly white snow threw a soft blanket over him; and they erected a stone to him there. On the stone were carved these words, "Let Me Serve"; and below his name they added, "And his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face."

Does his history seem sad to you? It does not seem so to those of us who knew him. To us it is the triumphant story of the power of personality. There are men and women throughout this land who are now teaching others what they learned in contact with his fine spirit. If you return to our village and speak to the men and women there of this former pastor, their faces will lighten and they will welcome you as a friend, for we do not call our minister dead, because he dwells forever in the hearts of his own people.

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